

HERFJON

BY
STJEPAN
ŠEJIĆ



مِنْ أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ



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HARLEY QUINN created by PAUL DINI and BRUCE TIMM

A dynamic illustration of Harley Quinn in her signature red and black diamond-patterned outfit. She is depicted in a powerful, lunging pose, holding a large, bloody, bone-like object in her right hand. Her white hair is styled in pigtails with red ribbons, and she has a fierce, screaming expression. The background features a large, repeating diamond pattern in red and black. The character's legs also feature the diamond pattern, and she wears black boots with silver buckles.

HARLEEN

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HARLEEN

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BOOK ONE



AT FIRST IT SEEMS LIKE ANOTHER NIGHTMARE.

IN THIS DREAM I WALK A LONG, WINDING ROAD THROUGH A WARPED VERSION OF GOTHAM.

I'VE DREAMT OF THIS ROAD BEFORE. I'VE SEEN **THE TERRORS** THAT AWAIT ME AT ITS END.

AND YET, EVERY TIME, I KEEP WALKING.

EVERY TIME I THINK, **THIS TIME WILL BE DIFFERENT.**

AND THIS TIME, I'M **RIGHT.**

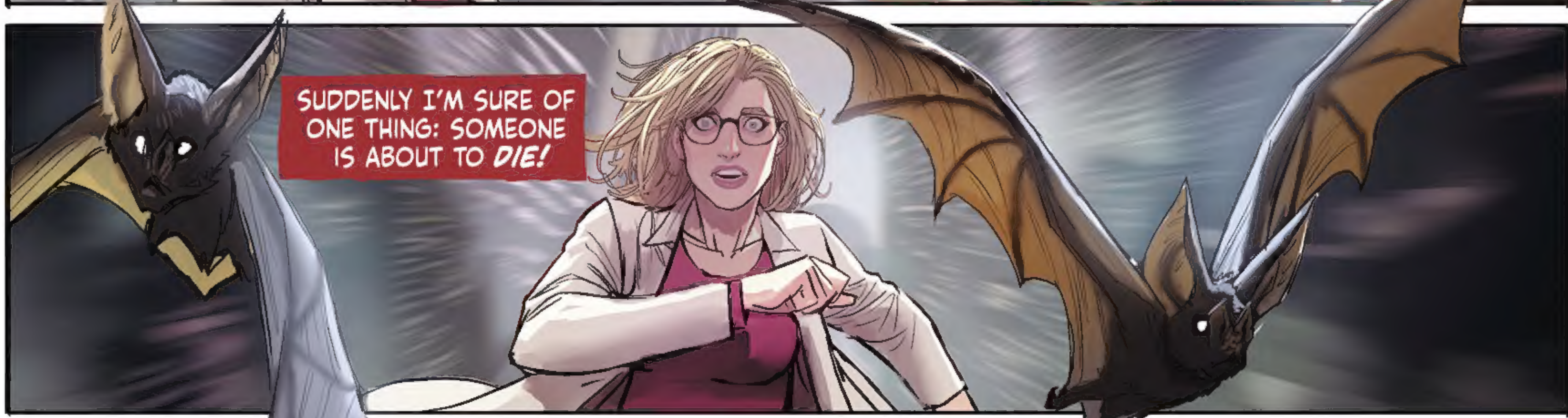


ANY OTHER NIGHT, THE MIST WOULD RISE AND A **GRINNING MONSTER** WOULD ERUPT OUT OF IT TO **DEVOUR ME.**

THIS NIGHT, THERE IS NO SINISTER LAUGHTER. NO MOUTH WITH TOO MANY TEETH SMILING HUNGRILY AT ME.

NO, THIS TIME IT'S JUST **THE BATS.**

THEY LOOK LIKE BATS, BUT IN MY DREAMING MIND THEY'RE **VULTURES.**



SUDDENLY I'M SURE OF ONE THING: SOMEONE IS ABOUT TO **DIE!**



THEY TAKE ME TO THE INEVITABLE PLACE...

... **THE END OF THE ROAD** WHERE SWIRLING MISTS RISE AND, LIKE EVERY OTHER TIME, **HE** IS THERE.

BUT THIS TIME IT'S DIFFERENT.

THIS TIME, THE MONSTER IS DIFFERENT...



I RUN TOWARD THEM...

THE MAN ON THE GROUND...

THE GIANT BEAST...

AND THE BATS.

IF A LARGE GROUP OF CROWS GETS TO BE CALLED A *MURDER*, THEN IN MY DREAM I THINK, *THIS IS A FEAST.*

A FEAST OF BATS.

BUT HUNGRY THOUGH THEY ARE, THEY DON'T ATTACK. INSTEAD THEY *SCREAM*. THEY *LAUGH*. AND THEY *CHEER*.

THEY WANT *HIM* TO DO IT *FOR* THEM.

THE GREAT BEAST MUST DRAW BLOOD. THE GREAT BEAST MUST *KILL* FOR THE FEAST TO BEGIN.

AND IN MY DREAM I FEEL *GUILTY*. I FEEL *RESPONSIBLE*.

KILL

KILL

KILL

KILL

KILL



AFTER ALL...HE IS MY PATIENT.

LEAVE HIM ALONE!



CAST HIM AWAY!
HE IS BEYOND HELP.

NO!
I...
...I CAN DO IT!



BE IT ON YOUR HANDS, THEN, DOCTOR...

THE GREAT BEAST LEAVES, HIS BATS IN TOW.



THE AIR GROWS SILENT.

ARE YOU...

ARE YOU
OKAY?

YOU...

WHY DIDN'T
YOU RUN?

YOU WERE
SUPPOSED TO
RUN.

NOT
ANYMORE.

I AM *YOUR*
DOCTOR.

I'M HERE
TO *HELP*.

YES, THIS DREAM
IS DIFFERENT.

FOR THE FIRST TIME, HIS
FACE IS NOT MONSTROUS.

HE SMILES...AND I MAKE THE
WORST MISTAKE OF MY LIFE...

...I *SMILE BACK*.

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN I WOULD
THINK BACK ON THIS DREAM AND
FIGHT BACK A LAUGH.

THE WHOLE THING FELT LIKE ONE OF THOSE TRASHY
ROMANCE TALES WHERE A PLAIN, ORDINARY GIRL
MEETS MR. TALL, SEXY AND DANGEROUS. A BEAST
THAT SIMPLY NEEDS HER GENTLE TOUCH
AND A LITTLE BIT OF GUIDANCE.

IN THOSE STORIES, THE GIRL HELPS
THE BEAST REGAIN HIS HUMANITY...

IN THOSE STORIES, THE
BEAST *LOVES* THE GIRL...

I ASSURE YOU, MINE IS
NOT ONE SUCH STORY.

NO, MY STORY ENDED UP BEING
SOMETHING COMPLETELY
DIFFERENT.



MY STORY'S THE ONE WHERE THE GIRL
DANCES WITH THE DEVIL, AND HE TAKES
HER WITH HIM ON A LONG ROAD TO HELL.

THAT ROAD STARTS,
AS THEY OFTEN DO...

...WITH A GOOD INTENTION.

I MEAN, YOU GOTTA UNDERSTAND, DOCTOR, WE **ALL** HAD OUR BEST INTENTIONS GOING IN.

WE HAD A CODE! NO WOMEN, NO CHILDREN!

MICKEY AND I **SWORE** TO THAT...

I MEAN, WE WERE NOTHING BUT TWO AMPED-UP JACKASSES WITH MORE BALLS THAN BRAINS, BUT WE WEREN'T FUCKING **ANIMALS**.

FOR THE FIRST FEW MONTHS WE KEPT OUR PROMISE. IT WASN'T HARD. WE HAD THE INSURGENTS ON THE MOVE...

HELL, THE WAR SEEMED AS GOOD AS **WON**... BUT THAT'S THE THING. WHEN YOU GOT THE TECHNOLOGICAL SUPERIORITY, THE ENEMY **ADAPTS**.

PROPER TERM FOR IT WAS **GUERRILLA WARFARE**... WE CALLED IT THE **ROACH WAR**.

SEE, THEY WERE LIKE ROACHES CRAWLING FROM UNDERNEATH EVERY FUCKING ROCK. YOU COULD NEVER **GET RID OF THEM**.

SNEAK ATTACKS, BACK STABS...ON ONE OCCASION THEY EVEN POISONED OUR WATER SUPPLY.

A SIX-MONTH DEPLOYMENT STRETCHED INTO **THREE YEARS**...

ONE DAY MICKEY AND I WERE ON A BREAK, VISITING A LOCAL BAR.

LOOKING FOR SOME **ACTION**. DOCTOR, YOU UNDERSTAND...

THERE WAS THIS GIRL. SHE WAS EYEING MICKEY... SO I...I...

I KEPT **PUSHING** HIM. I MEAN, HOW MANY CHANCES DOES A GUY HAVE TO...PARDON MY FRENCH, BREAK OFF A PIECE OF ASS.

LITTLE BITCH HAD A **RAZOR**... OPENED MICKEY'S THROAT EAR TO EAR. SO I BROKE **MY OATH** THAT DAY. BLEW HER BRAINS OUT. EMPTIED THE WHOLE DAMNED CLIP.

SHIT LIKE THAT, IT SNAPS SOMETHING INSIDE OF YOU...

YOU START SEEING THE WORLD **DIFFERENTLY**...

WOMEN, CHILDREN...AT THE END OF THE DAY, THEY WERE **THEIR** WOMEN AND CHILDREN. EACH ONE OF THEM HIDING A RAZOR, A GUN, A FUCKING BOMB FOR ALL I KNEW...

IN A WAR ZONE, **EVERYONE IS AN ENEMY**!

WITHOUT HIM, I HAD TO BE CAREFUL. GREW EYES IN THE BACK OF MY HEAD.

MICKEY AND I...WE HAD EACH OTHER'S BACK, YOU KNOW?

TRAINED MYSELF TO SEE **THE MURDER** IN THEIR EYES.

I HAD TO GET THEM BEFORE THEY GOT ME.

SO WHAT ABOUT THE HOSPITAL?

THEIR HOSPITAL! THE CIVILIAN USE OF IT WAS A **FRONT**. THERE WERE OVER **SIXTY** COMBATANTS THERE! IT WAS **MY CHANCE**!

HELL, THEY SHOULD HAVE GIVEN ME A DAMNED **MEDAL**!

INSTEAD, I GOT A DISHONORABLE DISCHARGE AND AN ARREST, AND HERE I AM SPILLING EVERYTHING TO YOU, DOCTOR...

UH...



QUINZEL,
MR. MORRIS.
DR. QUINZEL.

TWO YEARS LATER.

MR. MORRIS **FAILED** TO MENTION THAT THE HOSPITAL HE OPENED FIRE ON ALSO HOUSED 24 INJURED CHILDREN.
THERE WERE **NO SURVIVORS.**



EDUCATIONAL SYMPOSIUM:
Center for the Study of Criminal Psychology, Gotham City.

"IN A WAR ZONE, **EMPATHY** IS A **LIABILITY.**"

"ACKNOWLEDGING THE HUMANITY OF YOUR ENEMY WILL CAUSE YOU TO HESITATE."

"IT IS A COURTESY YOUR OPPONENT MAY NOT GRANT YOU IN RETURN."

THESE WERE THE WORDS OF MR. MORRIS'S SUPERIOR OFFICER, WHO TO THIS DAY **DEFENDS** HIS SUBORDINATE'S ACTIONS.

THESE WORDS SPEAK TO THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM AND DEFINE THE CORE OF MY **HYPOTHESIS.**



FIGHT OR FLIGHT RESPONSE HAS LONG BEEN STUDIED, AND ITS UNDERLYING PROCESSES MAPPED.

IT IS AN INSTINCTIVE **REACTION** THAT **OVERRIDES** REGULAR BRAIN CHEMISTRY WHILE DAMPENING ONE'S ABILITY TO PROCESS **EMPATHY.**

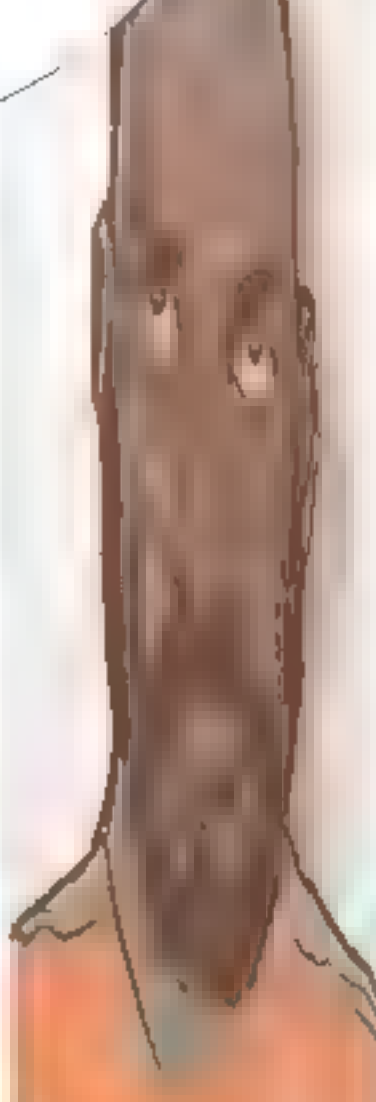
IN A WAR ZONE, THIS STATE OF **HYPERAROUSAL** CAN **SAVE LIVES.**

THIS INSTINCT IS A PART OF A **GREATER** MECHANISM.

A KIND OF A **MENTAL IMMUNE SYSTEM** DESIGNED TO PROTECT US FROM IMMINENT THREAT BY MANAGING BODY CHEMISTRY IN A WAY THAT MAXIMIZES OUR CHANCES OF SURVIVAL.

BUT WHAT IF THIS MECHANISM IS OVERUSED?

AND FOR EXTENDED PERIODS OF TIME?

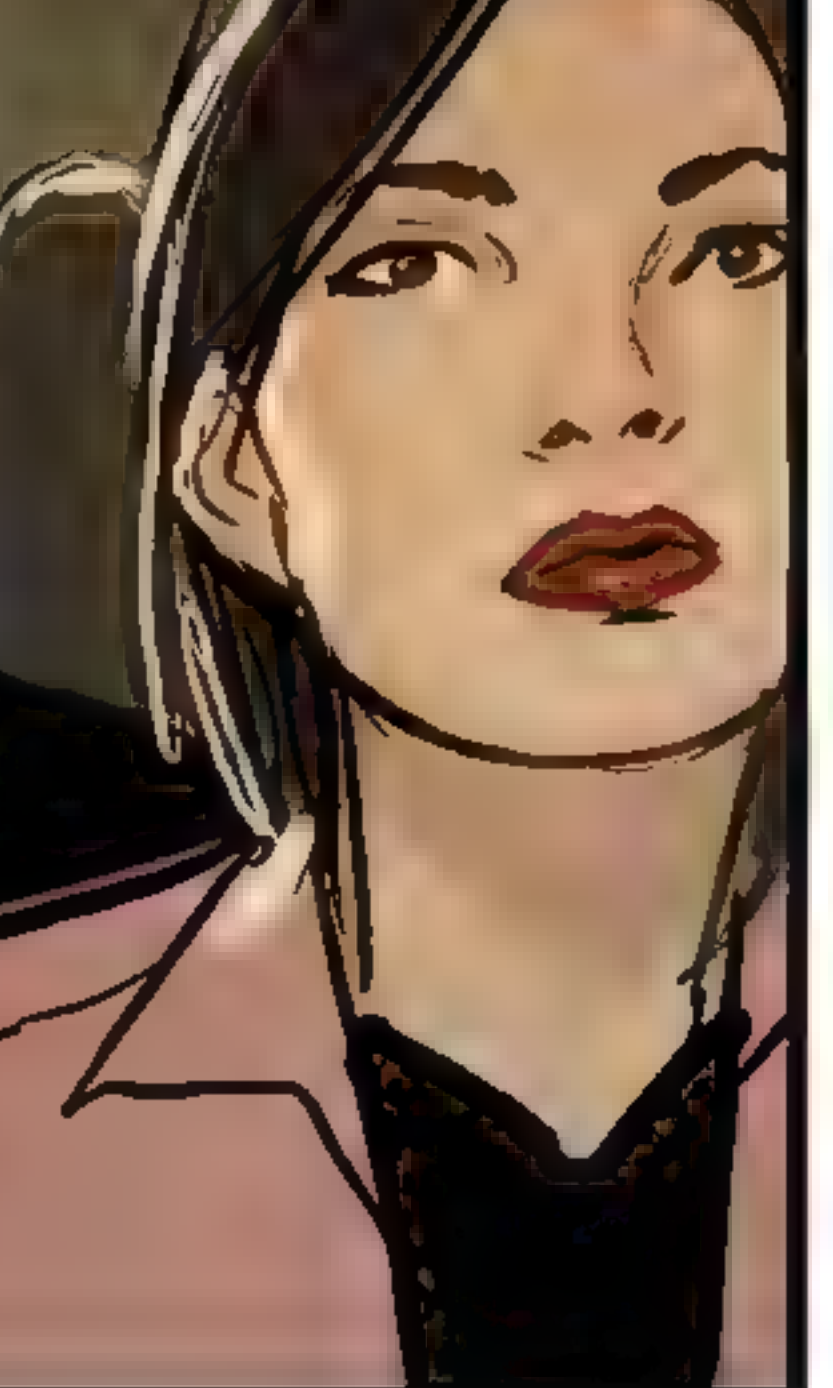
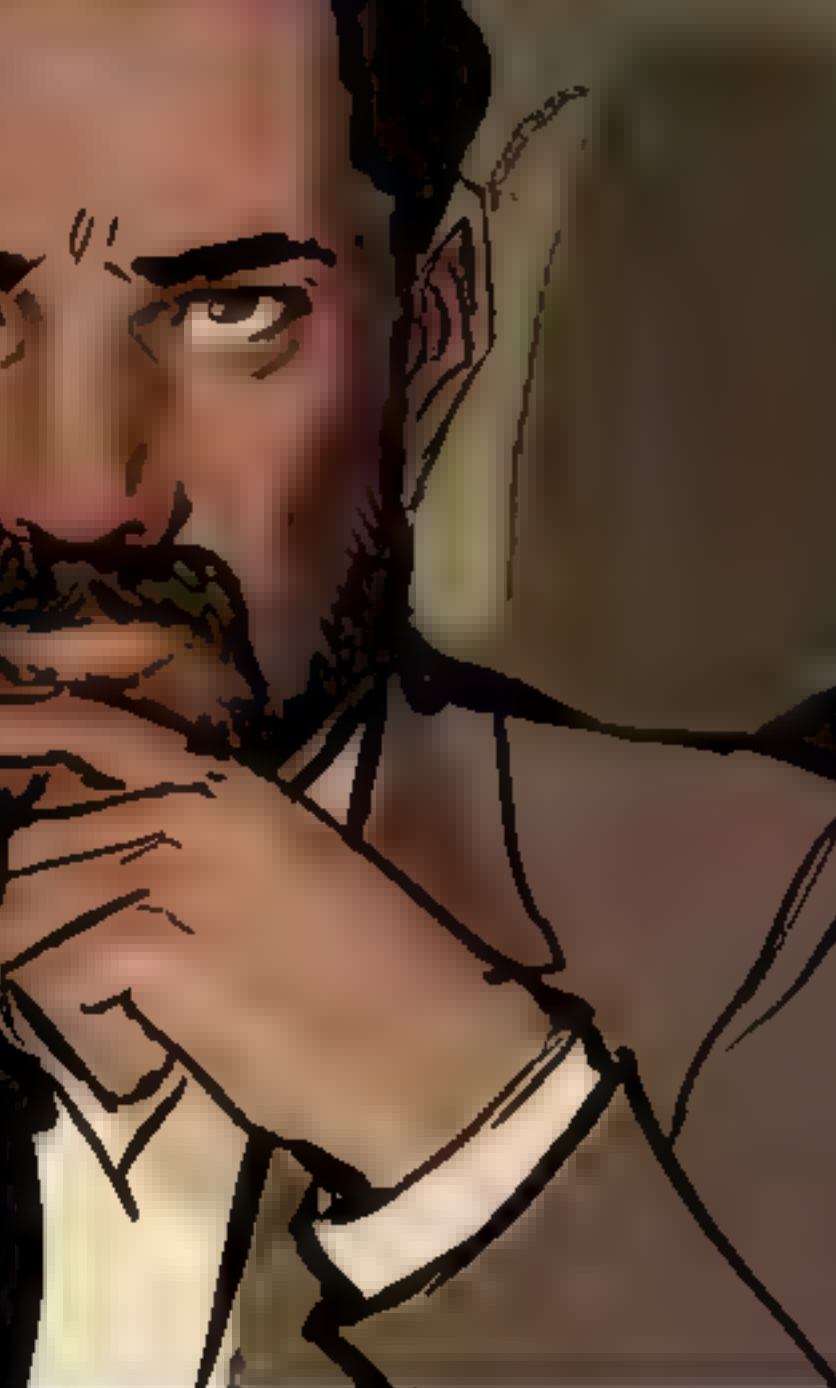
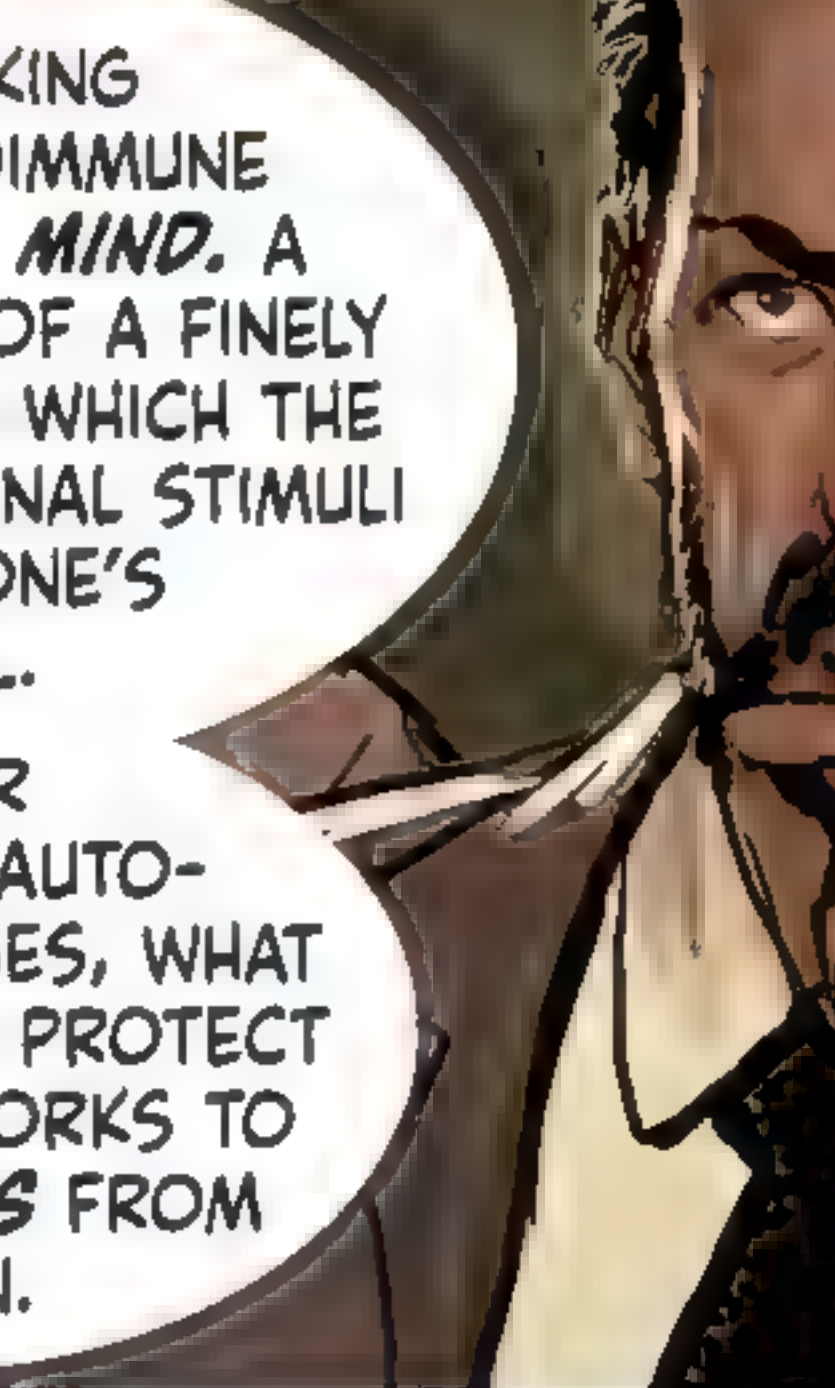
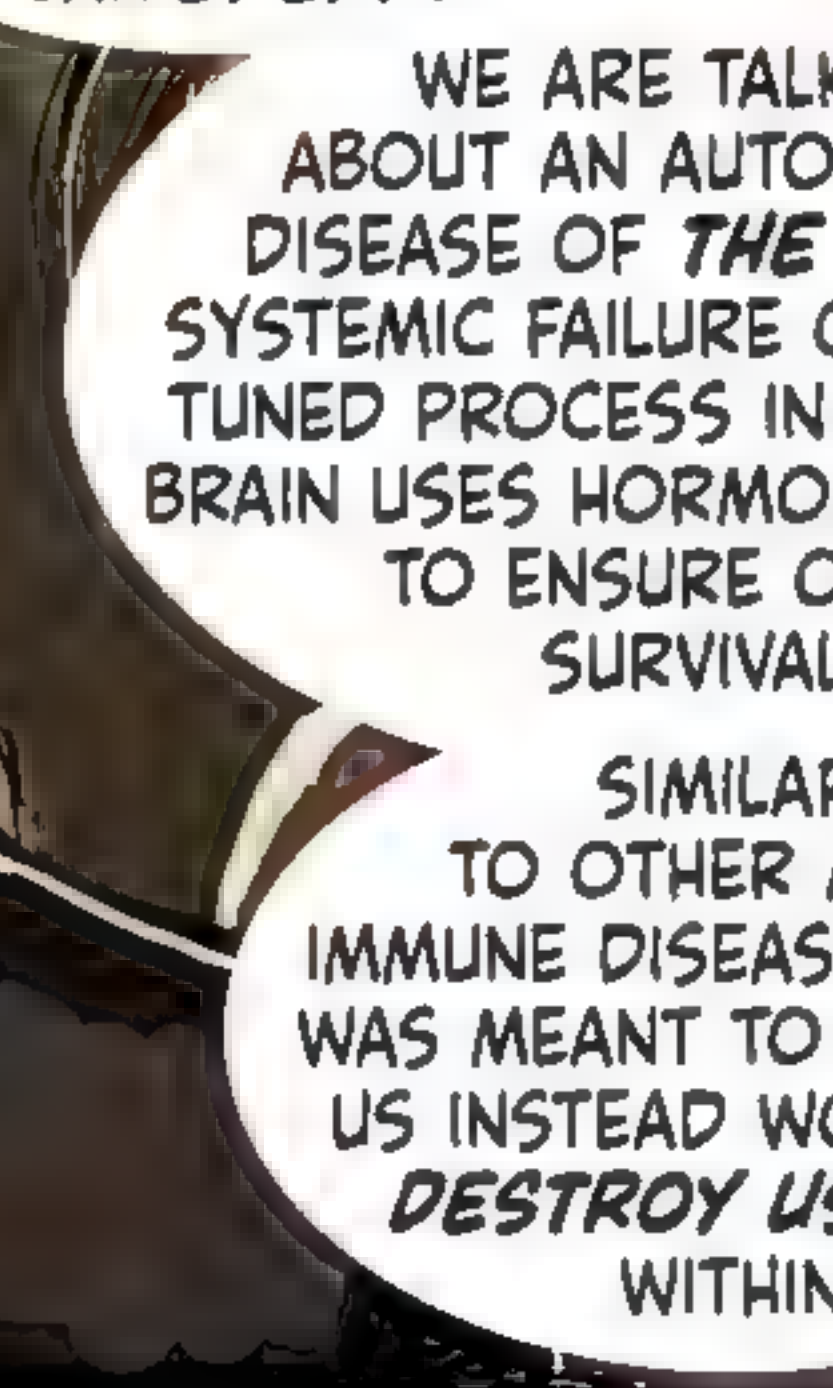


IT'S NOT HARD TO IMAGINE THIS IN HOSTILE ENVIRONMENTS WHERE SOLDIERS SPEND **YEARS.**

UNDER THOSE CONDITIONS, I PROPOSE THIS MENTAL IMMUNE SYSTEM CAN **BREAK.**

WE ARE TALKING ABOUT AN AUTOIMMUNE DISEASE OF **THE MIND.** A SYSTEMIC FAILURE OF A FINELY TUNED PROCESS IN WHICH THE BRAIN USES HORMONAL STIMULI TO ENSURE ONE'S SURVIVAL.

SIMILAR TO OTHER AUTO-IMMUNE DISEASES, WHAT WAS MEANT TO PROTECT US INSTEAD WORKS TO **DESTROY US** FROM WITHIN.



TO PUT IT
BLUNTLY, THIS MAY
RESULT IN **PERMANENT
DETERIORATION** OF
EMPATHY WHICH,
UH...

...WHICH
MIGHT LEAD
TO DEVELOPING
ANTISOCIAL
BEHAVIORS...

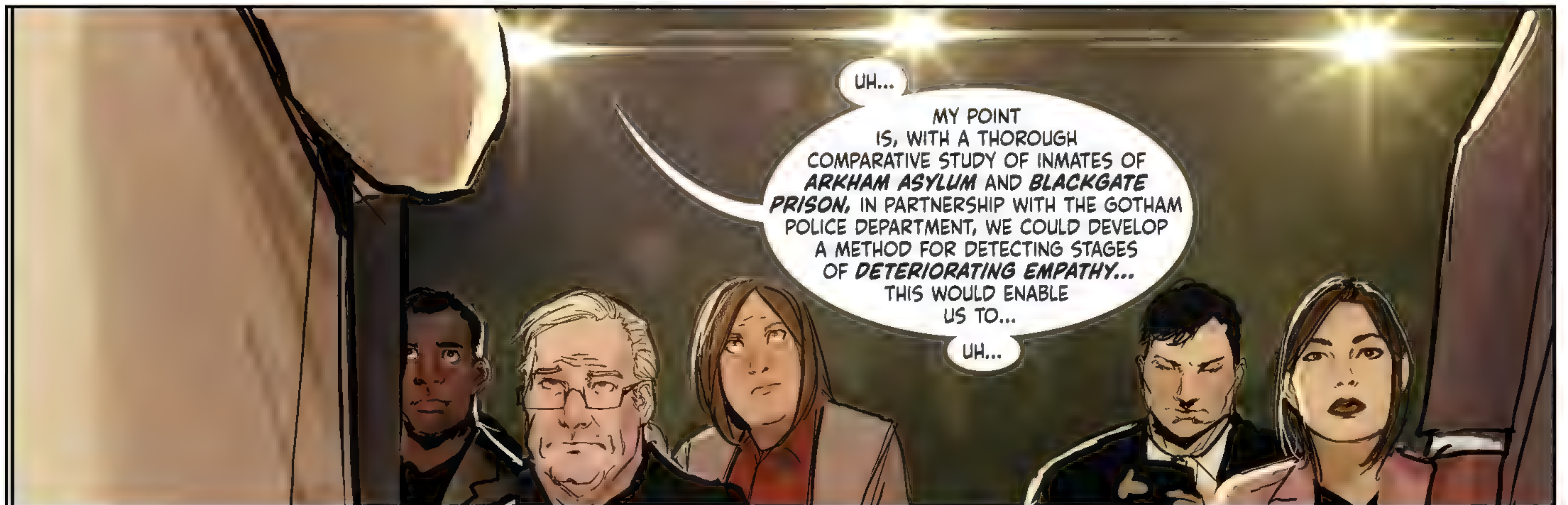
OF COURSE,
IDENTIFYING SUCH AN
AUTOIMMUNE DISEASE
IN A DISTANT WAR ZONE
IS UNLIKELY.

HOWEVER,
WE NEED LOOK
NO FURTHER FOR A
WAR ZONE THAN THE
**STREETS OF
GOTHAM**
ITSELF...

UH...

STATISTICS OF RECIDIVISM
STRONGLY INDICATE
THAT THERE IS A LARGE
ISSUE NOT ONLY WITH PETTY
CRIMINALS RELAPSING INTO
THE LIFE OF CRIME, BUT ALSO
WITH THE **INCREASING
SEVERITY** OF THOSE
CRIMES...

UM...
THAT...



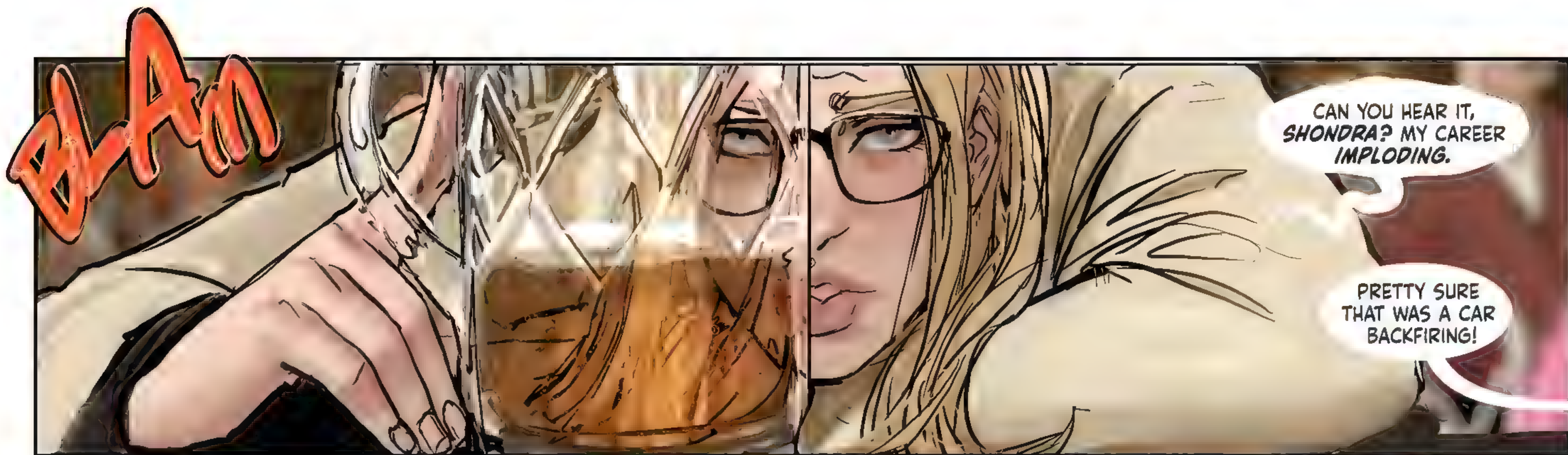
UH...

MY POINT
IS, WITH A THOROUGH
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF INMATES OF
ARKHAM ASYLUM AND **BLACKGATE
PRISON**, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE GOTHAM
POLICE DEPARTMENT, WE COULD DEVELOP
A METHOD FOR DETECTING STAGES
OF **DETERIORATING EMPATHY...**
THIS WOULD ENABLE
US TO...

UH...

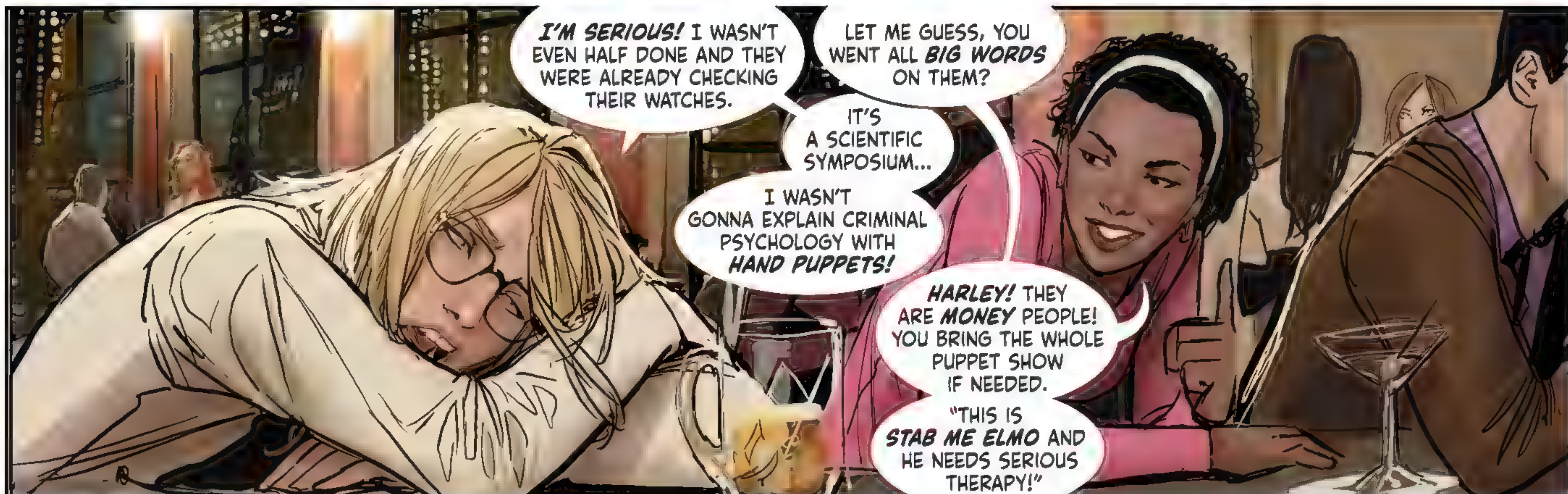


...IDENTIFY
A SOCIOPATH IN THE
MAKING...



CAN YOU HEAR IT, SHONDRA? MY CAREER IMPLODING.

PRETTY SURE THAT WAS A CAR BACKFIRING!



I'M SERIOUS! I WASN'T EVEN HALF DONE AND THEY WERE ALREADY CHECKING THEIR WATCHES.

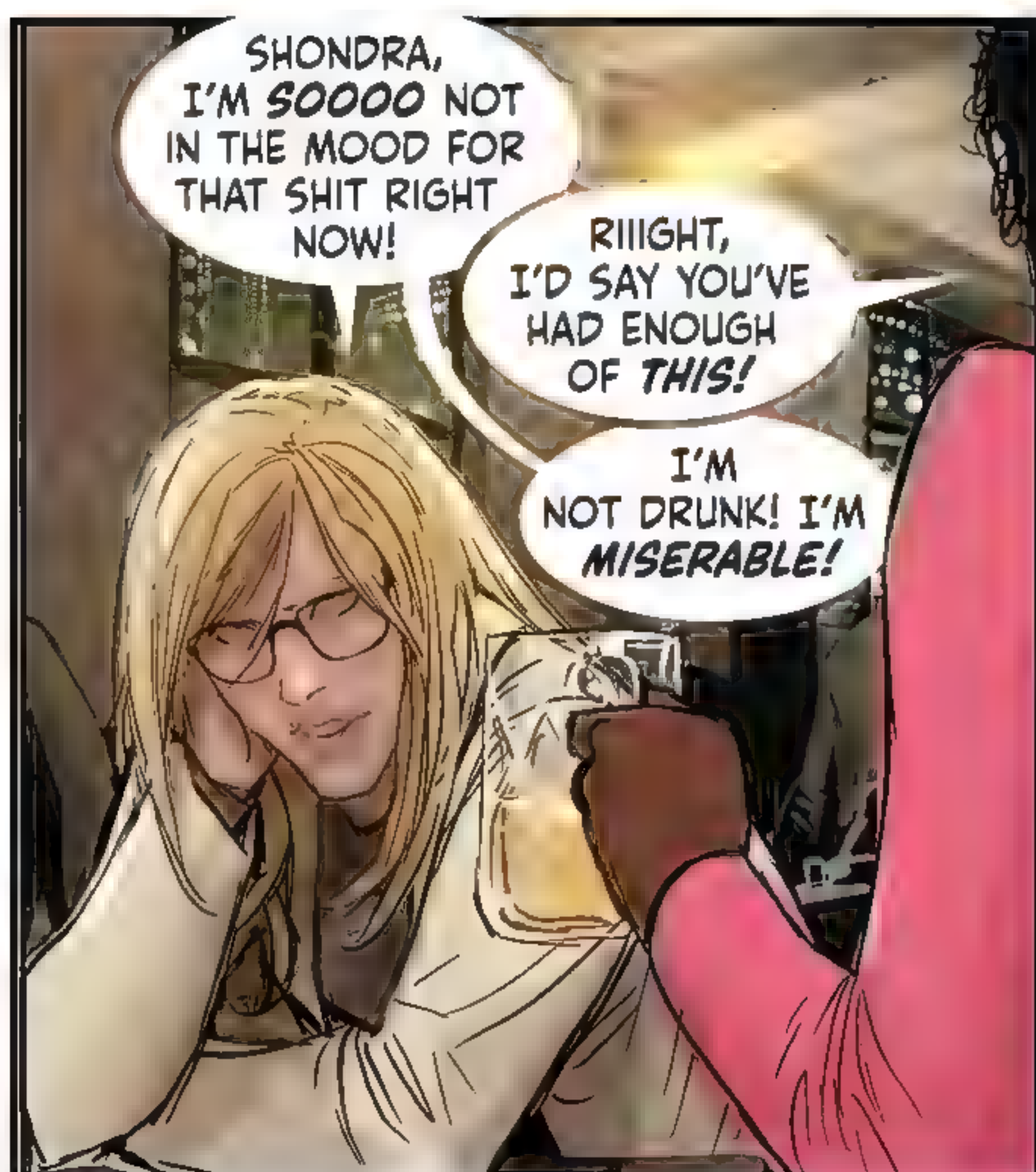
LET ME GUESS, YOU WENT ALL **BIG WORDS** ON THEM?

IT'S A SCIENTIFIC SYMPOSIUM...

I WASN'T GONNA EXPLAIN CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY WITH **HAND PUPPETS!**

HARLEY! THEY ARE **MONEY** PEOPLE! YOU BRING THE WHOLE PUPPET SHOW IF NEEDED.

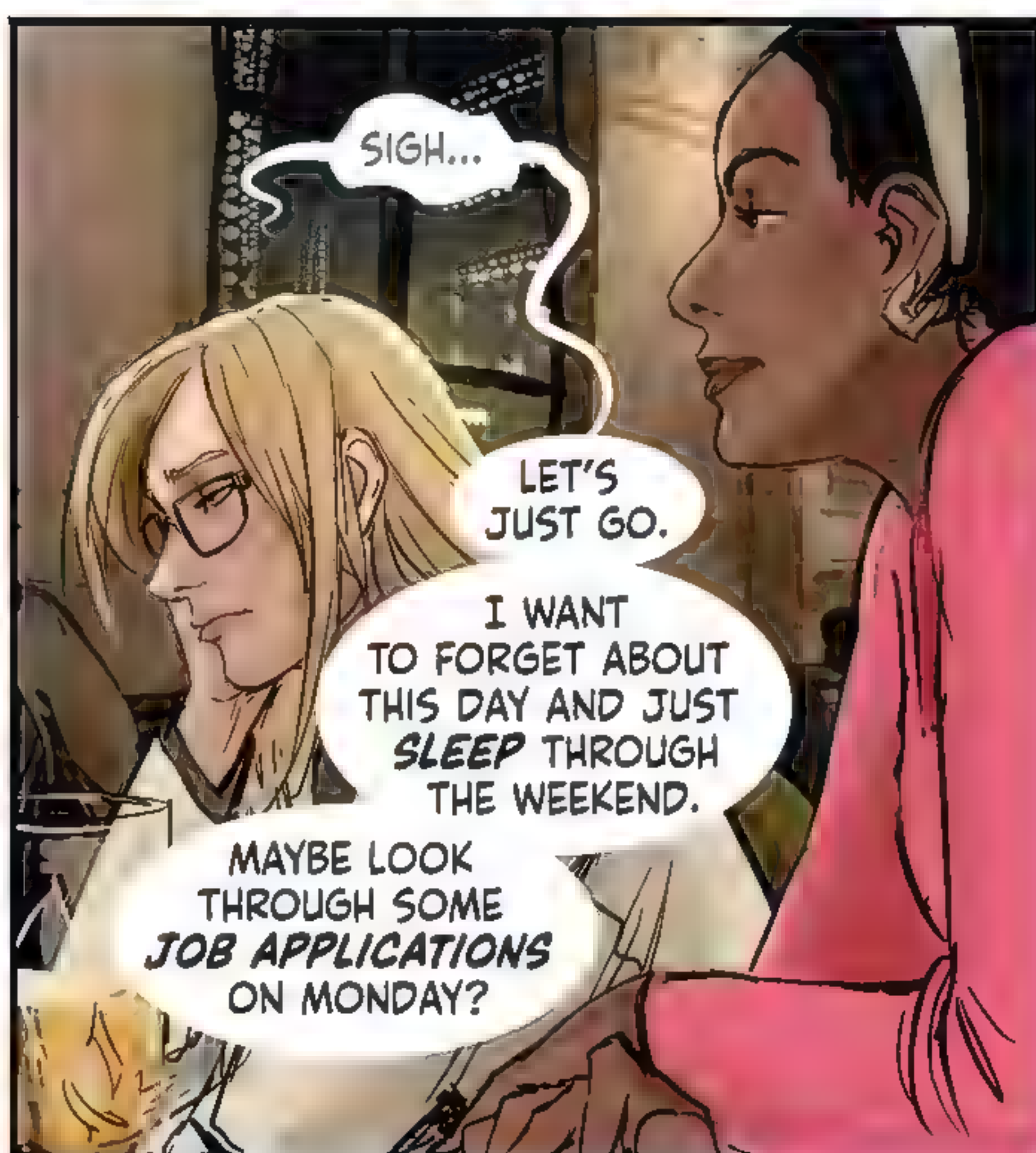
"THIS IS **STAB ME ELMO** AND HE NEEDS SERIOUS THERAPY!"



SHONDRA, I'M **SOOOO** NOT IN THE MOOD FOR THAT SHIT RIGHT NOW!

RIIIIGHT, I'D SAY YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH OF **THIS!**

I'M NOT DRUNK! I'M **MISERABLE!**



SIGH...

LET'S JUST GO.

I WANT TO FORGET ABOUT THIS DAY AND JUST **SLEEP** THROUGH THE WEEKEND.

MAYBE LOOK THROUGH SOME **JOB APPLICATIONS** ON MONDAY?



SO WHAT ABOUT YOU? HOW DID YOUR THING GO?

HARLEEN, I'M PROPOSING **PHARMACEUTICAL** SOLUTIONS TO TREAT FORMS OF DEPRESSION.

THERE IS **MONEY** IN THAT!

MY PRESENTATION WENT **FLAWLESSLY.**



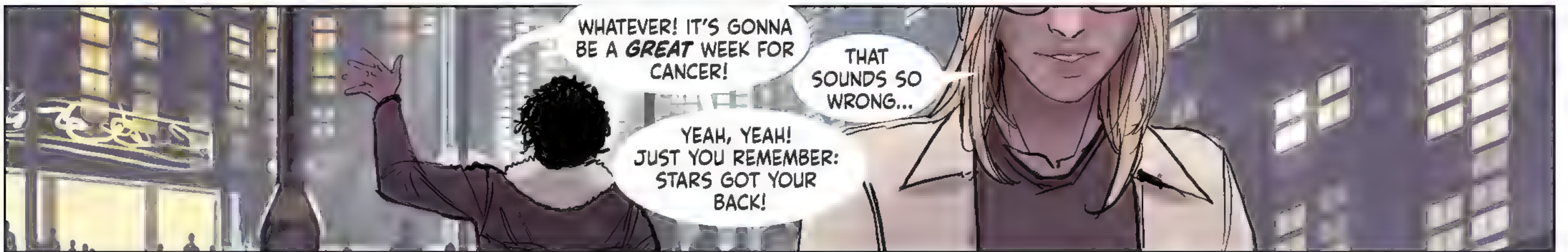
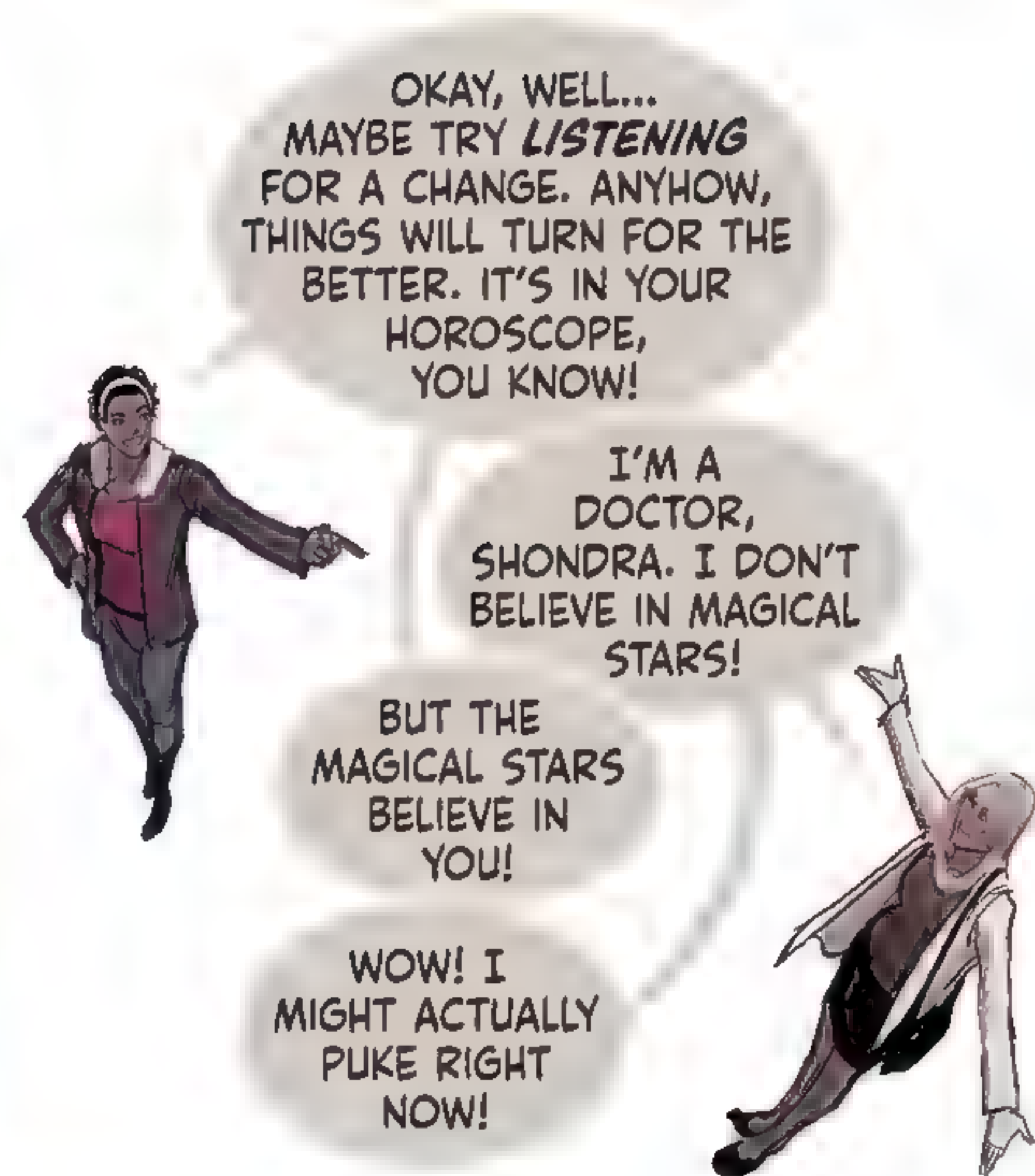
WOW... AND THEY USED TO CALL **ME** CYNICAL.

I SEEM TO REMEMBER PEOPLE CALLING YOU **MUCH WORSE** THAN THAT...

LOW BLOW, SHONDRA!

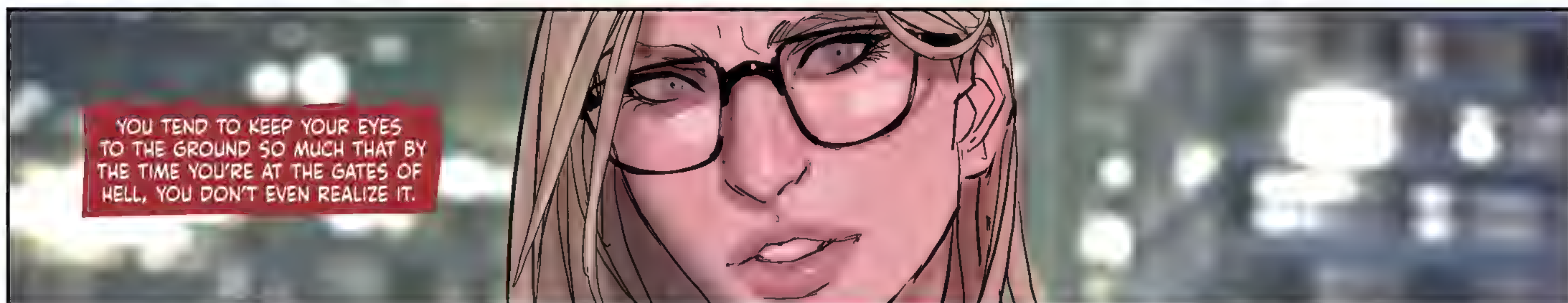
WHATEVER! ALL I'M SAYING IS IF YOU WANT THE RESEARCH CASH, YOU LEARN TO PLAY THE **MONEY** CROWD.

THE WAY I SEE IT, RICH FOLK HAVE LONG LINES OF ZEROES ON THEIR BANK ACCOUNTS AND SHORT ATTENTION SPANS. SO, THE FIRST THING YOU GOTTA DO IS MAKE THEM SEE HOW YOUR THEORY WILL **MAKE MONEY.**





THEN AGAIN, THAT'S THE THING
WITH ROADBUILDING. YOU GET
A LITTLE TUNNEL-VISIONED.



YOU TEND TO KEEP YOUR EYES
TO THE GROUND SO MUCH THAT BY
THE TIME YOU'RE AT THE GATES OF
HELL, YOU DON'T EVEN REALIZE IT.



NOT EVEN WHEN YOU
CAN FEEL THE FLAMES...



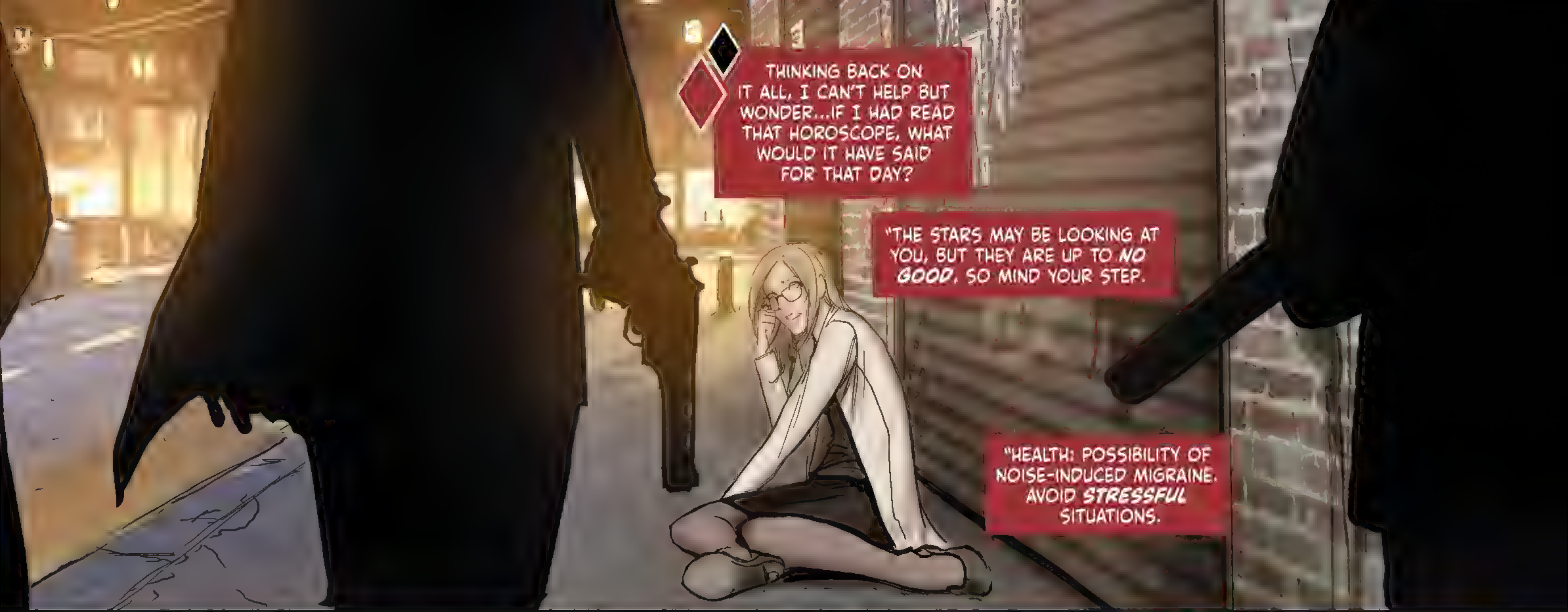
NOT EVEN WHEN YOU CAN
SMELL THE SMOKE...

NOT EVEN WHEN
THE *DEVIL HIMSELF*
COMES TO GREET YOU.

NOW WHAT
DID I TELL YOU, BOYS?
WHEN BUYING WEAPONS,
THERE'S JUST NO BEATING
PERSONAL QUALITY
CONTROL!

WRAP
IT ALL UP
TO GO!





THINKING BACK ON IT ALL, I CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER...IF I HAD READ THAT HOROSCOPE, WHAT WOULD IT HAVE SAID FOR THAT DAY?

"THE STARS MAY BE LOOKING AT YOU, BUT THEY ARE UP TO *NO GOOD*, SO MIND YOUR STEP.

"HEALTH: POSSIBILITY OF NOISE-INDUCED MIGRAINE. AVOID *STRESSFUL* SITUATIONS.



"ROMANCE: MR. TALL-DARK-AND-HANDSOME IS JUST *AROUND THE CORNER* TO SWEEP YOU OFF INTO A LIFE OF ADVENTURE.

"YOUR LUCKY NUMBER IS FOUR."

I MEAN, TRUTH BE TOLD, IF I WAS A SUPERSTITIOUS PERSON I WOULD HAVE CALLED US *STAR-CROSSED*.



DESTINED.

ME.



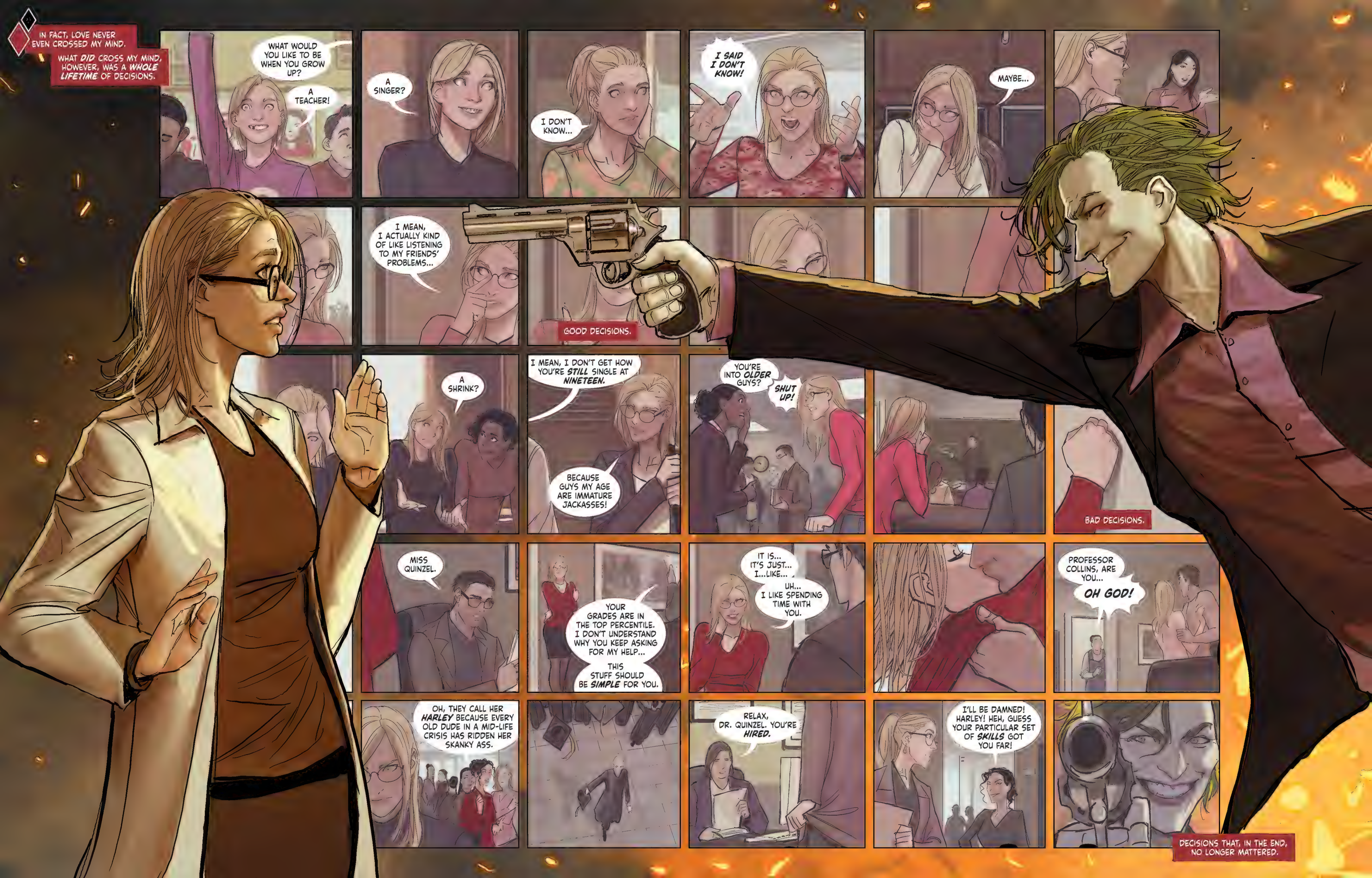
...AND HIM.

THE MAN I WOULD SOON LOVE.



PICKED A *HELL* OF A NIGHT FOR A WALK!

IT...WASN'T LOVE AT *FIRST SIGHT*, MIND YOU.



IN FACT, LOVE NEVER
EVEN CROSSED MY MIND.
WHAT *DID* CROSS MY MIND,
HOWEVER, WAS A *WHOLE*
LIFETIME OF DECISIONS.

WHAT WOULD
YOU LIKE TO BE
WHEN YOU GROW
UP?

A
TEACHER!

A
SINGER?

I DON'T
KNOW...

I SAID
I DON'T
KNOW!

MAYBE...

I MEAN,
I ACTUALLY KIND
OF LIKE LISTENING
TO MY FRIENDS'
PROBLEMS...

GOOD DECISIONS.

A
SHRINK?

I MEAN, I DON'T GET HOW
YOU'RE *STILL* SINGLE AT
NINETEEN.

BECAUSE
GUYS MY AGE
ARE IMMATURE
JACKASSES!

YOU'RE
INTO *OLDER*
GUYS?

SHUT
UP!

BAD DECISIONS.

MISS
QUINZEL.

YOUR
GRADES ARE IN
THE TOP PERCENTILE.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND
WHY YOU KEEP ASKING
FOR MY HELP...

THIS
STUFF SHOULD
BE *SIMPLE* FOR YOU.

IT IS...
IT'S JUST...
I...LIKE...

UH...
I LIKE SPENDING
TIME WITH
YOU.

PROFESSOR
COLLINS, ARE
YOU...

OH GOD!

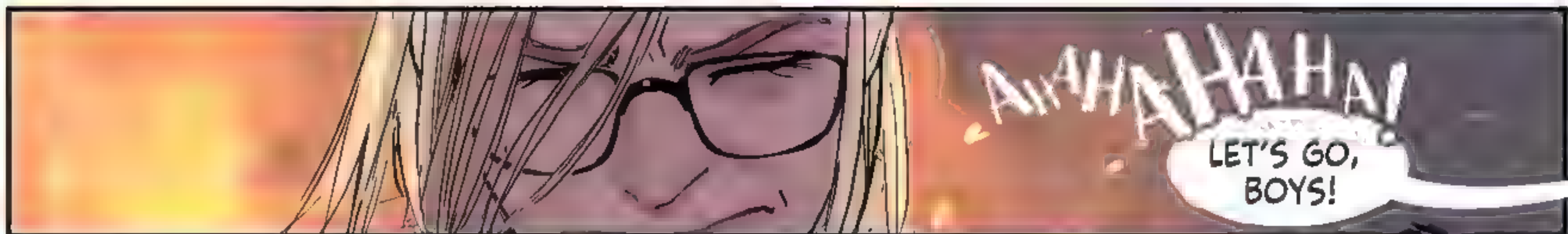
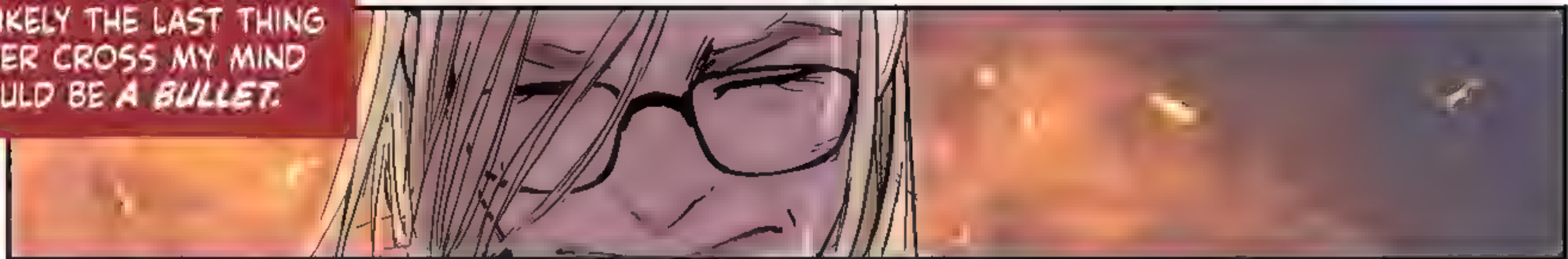
OH, THEY CALL HER
HARLEY BECAUSE EVERY
OLD DUDE IN A MID-LIFE
CRISIS HAS RIDDEN HER
SKANKY ASS.

RELAX,
DR. QUINZEL. YOU'RE
HIRED.

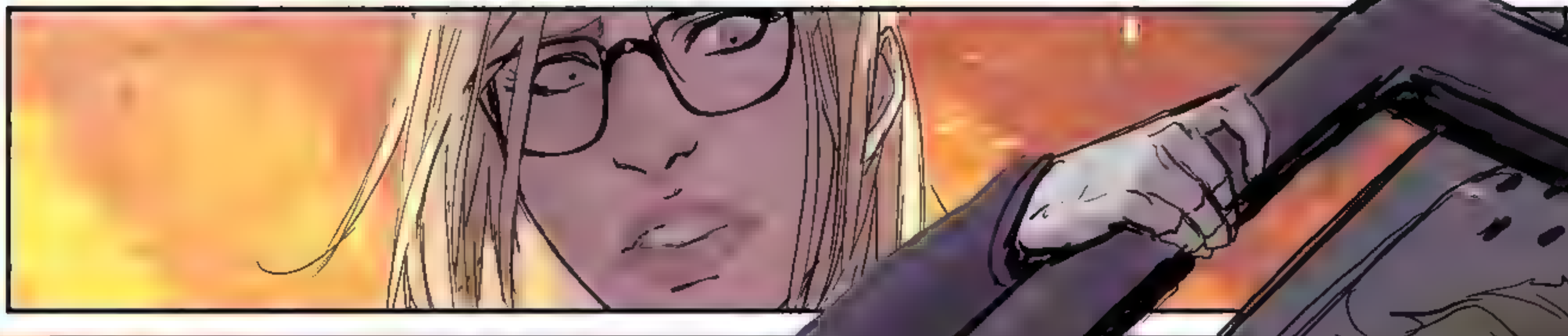
I'LL BE DAMNED!
HARLEY! HEH, GUESS
YOUR PARTICULAR SET
OF *SKILLS* GOT
YOU FAR!

DECISIONS THAT, IN THE END,
NO LONGER MATTERED.

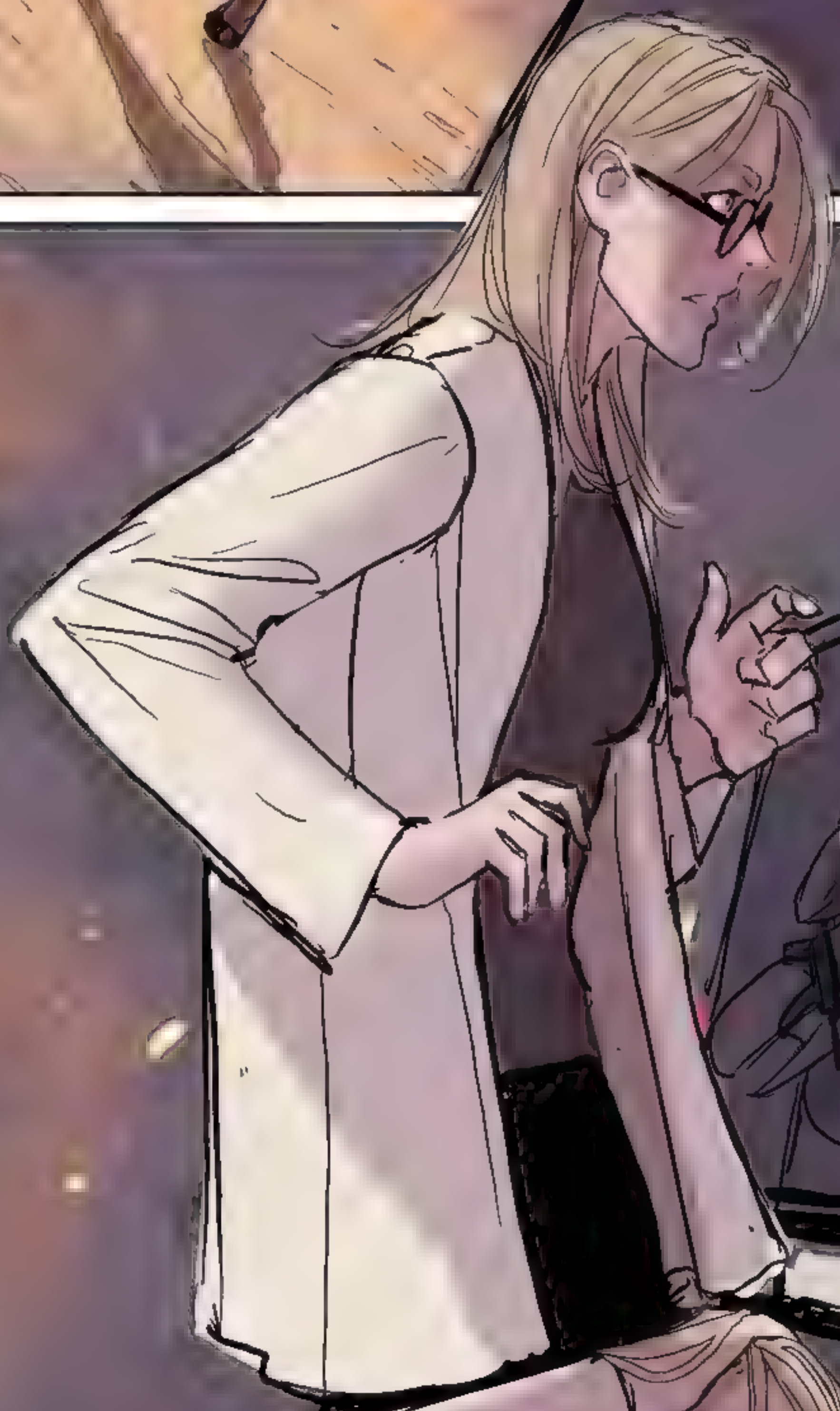
BECAUSE LET'S BE HONEST:
THEN AND THERE, IT WAS
VERY LIKELY THE LAST THING
TO EVER CROSS MY MIND
WOULD BE A *BULLET*.



AAAAHHHA!
LET'S GO,
BOYS!



WE GOT
SOME GIFTS TO
UNWRAP, AND YOU
KNOW HOW I LOVE
THAT *NEW GUN*
SMELL!



YOU BE
CAREFUL OUT THERE,
MA'AM! GOTHAM STREETS
ARE DANGEROUS AT
NIGHT, *DON'T'CHA*
KNOW?!

AAAAHHHA!



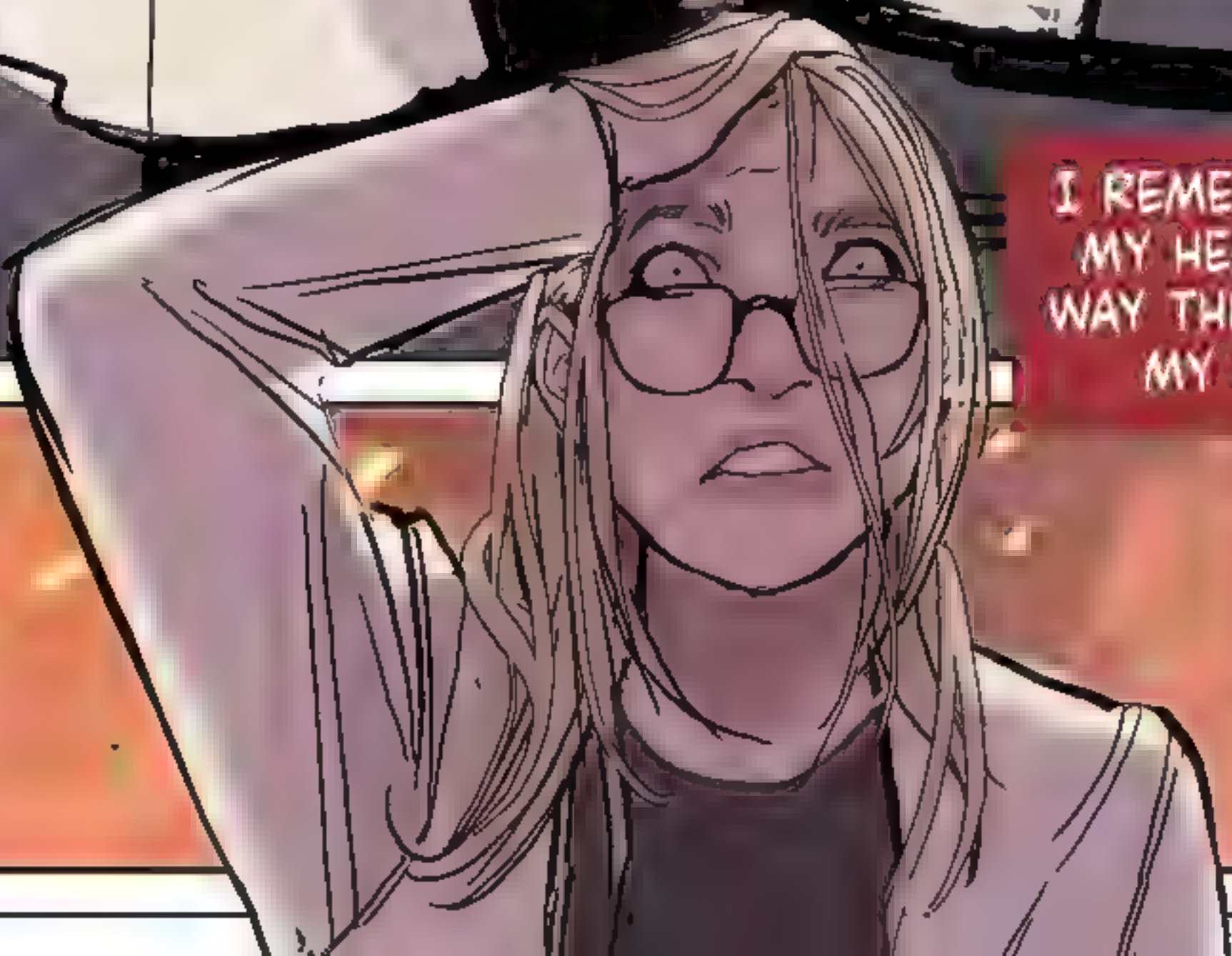
I REMEMBER IT CLEARLY.
MY HEART BEATING ITS
WAY THROUGH MY CHEST,
MY EARS RINGING.

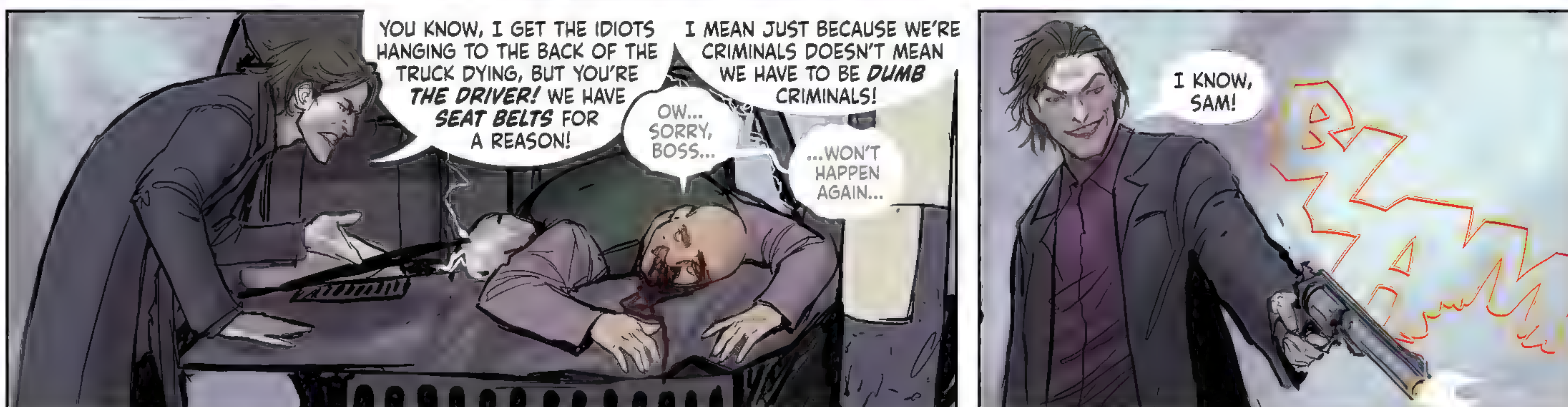
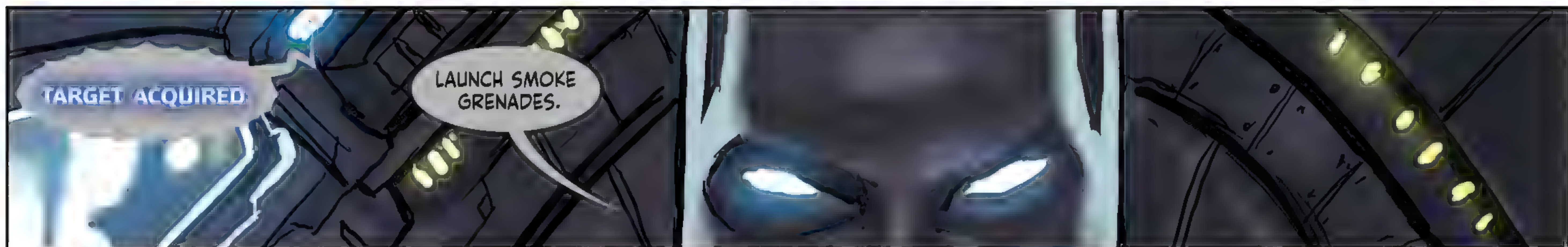
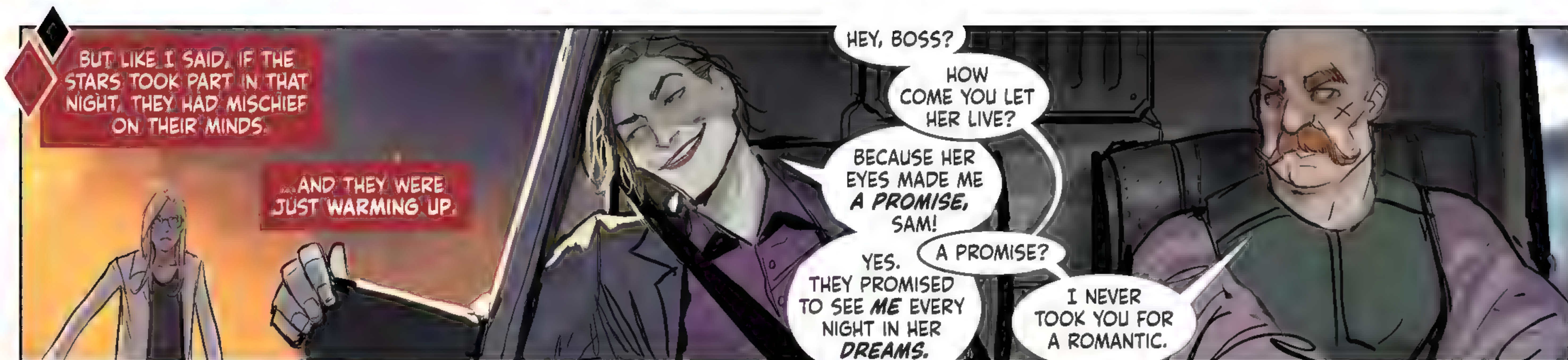
I'M FROZEN IN THE STREET.
DEATH HAS PASSED ME...

IT'S DONE...

IT'S DONE...

THE WORST OF
IT IS DONE!







BOB, YOU'RE MY
NUMBER ONE GUY
NOW!

UH...OKAY,
BOSS!

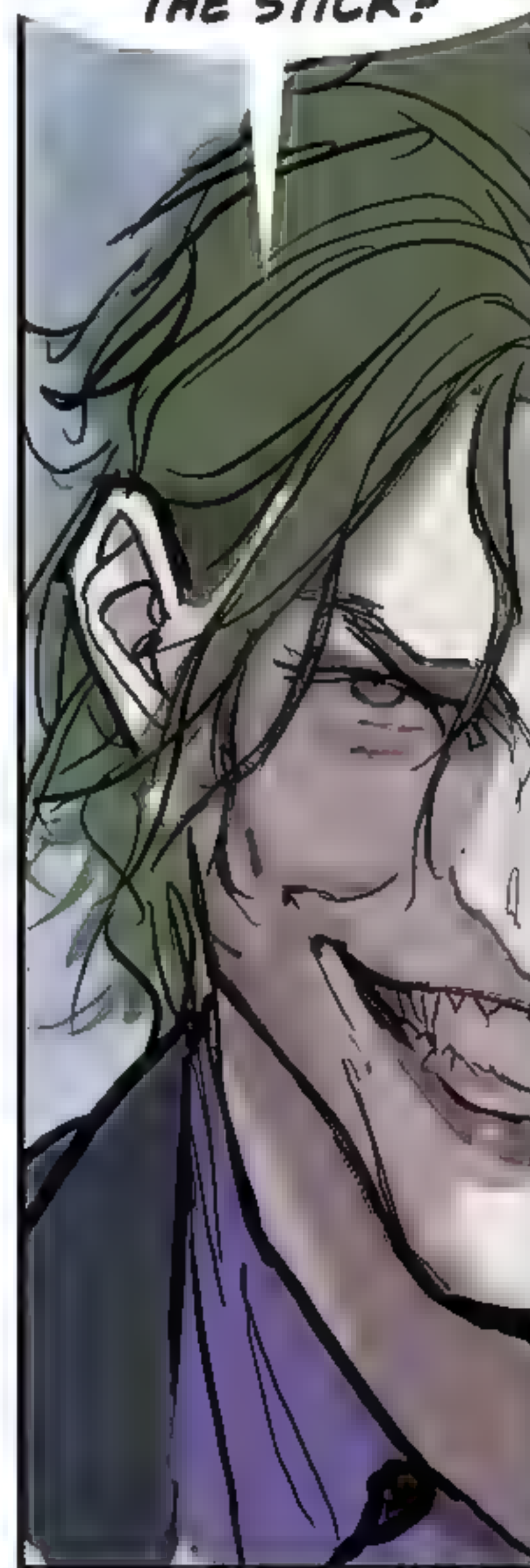
ANYWAYS, MY
APOLOGIES, BATS! I HAD SOME
COMPANY RESTRUCTURING TO DO,
BUT NOW YOU HAVE MY **FULL
ATTENTION!** HOW MAY I
ASSIST YOU?

**DROP THE
WEAPONS!**

JUST LIKE THAT,
HUH? SERIOUSLY? WHEN
HAS THAT **EVER** WORKED
FOR YOU?

I MEAN,
YOU GOT YOUR MEAN BAT-
PLANE THING...WHAT'S IT GONNA
BE? YOU GONNA OPEN FIRE
ON US? GONNA START
KILLIN'?

POINT I'M MAKING
IS...WE GOT OUR
CARROT, SO WHERE'S
THE STICK?



IT'S MORE
OF A BAT,
REALLY.



HA! AND
THEY SAY YOU DON'T
HAVE A SENSE OF
HUMOR!

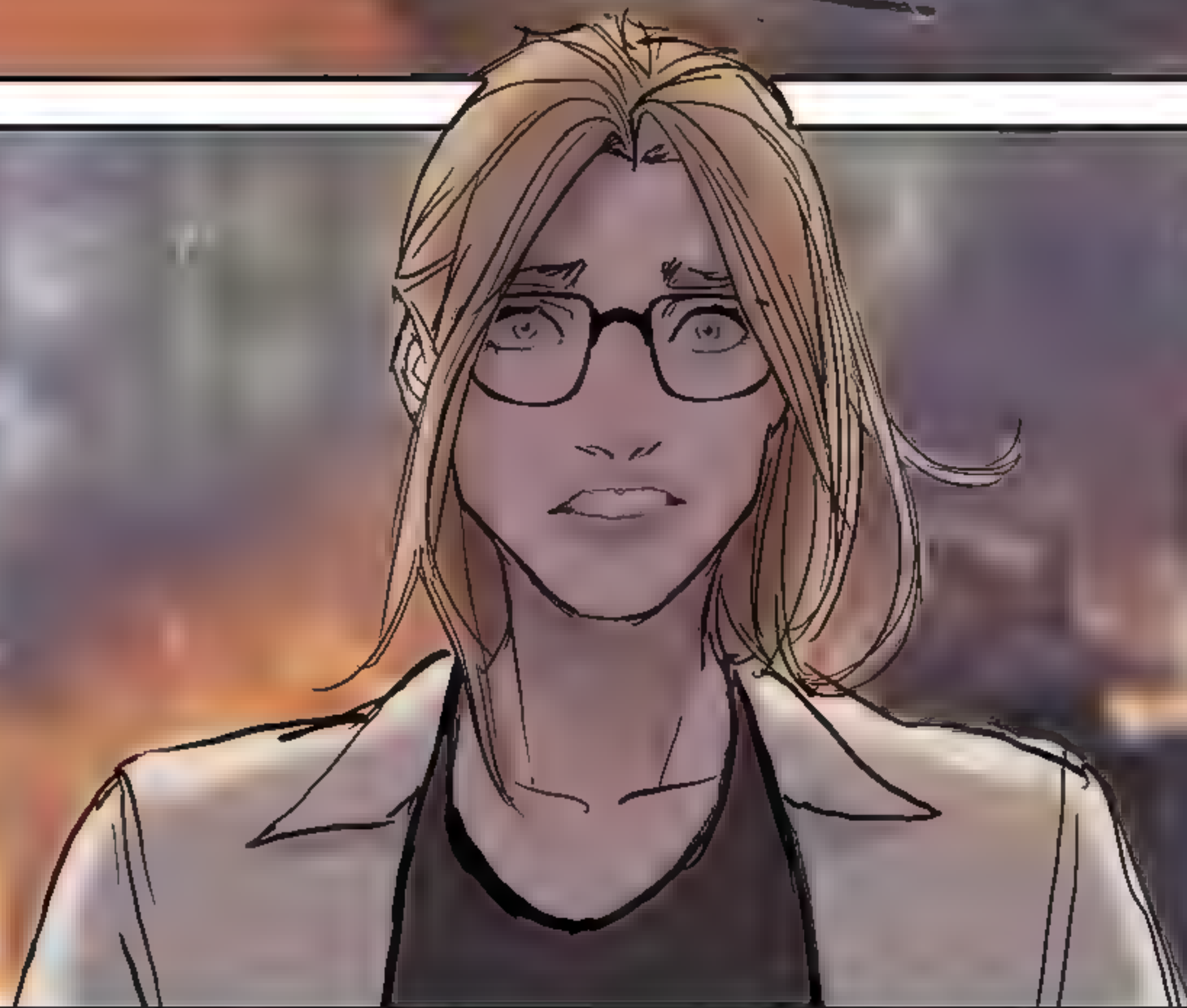
I REMEMBER
ONE THOUGHT RUNNING
THROUGH MY DAZED MIND.

I'M TRAPPED...

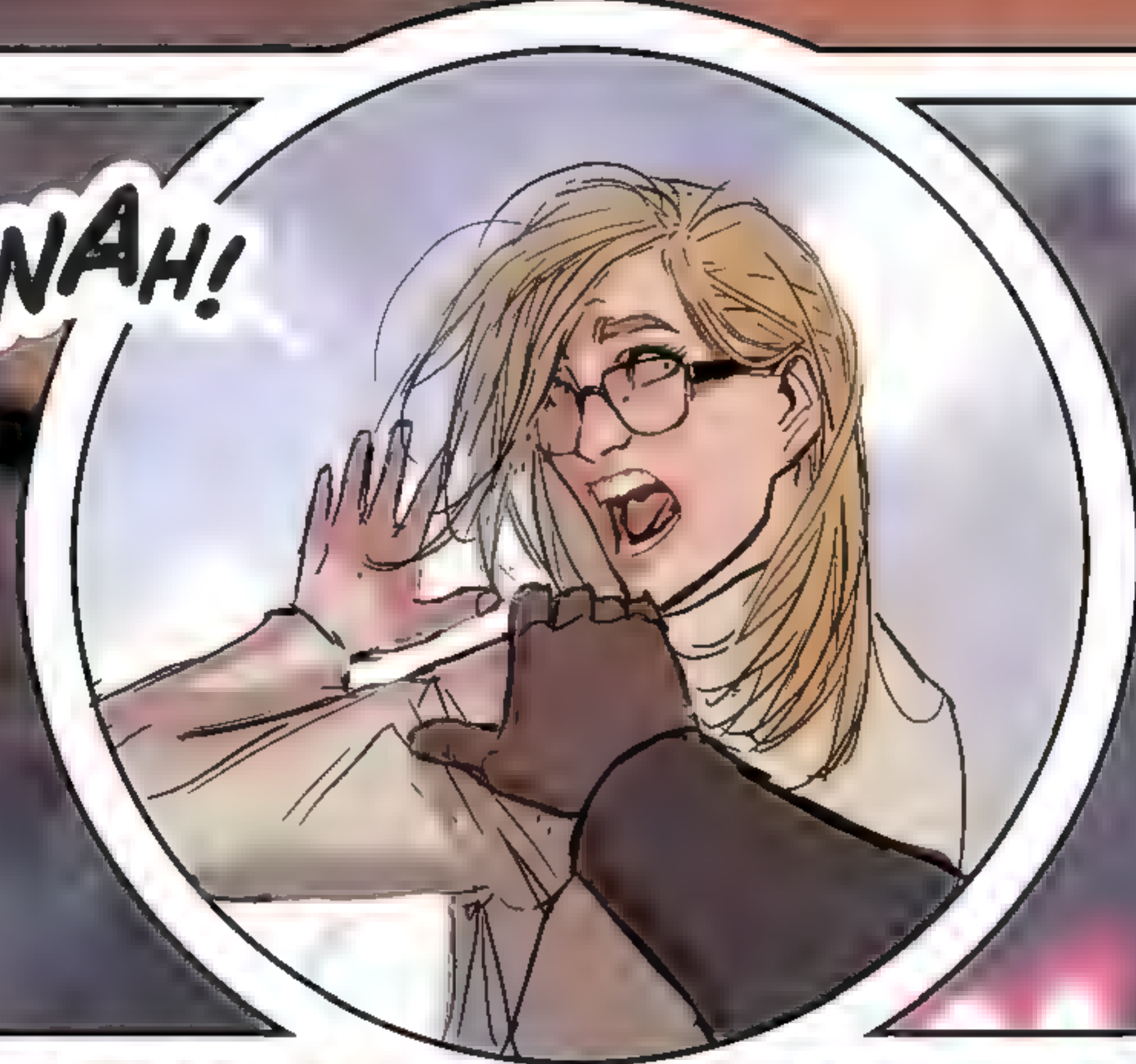
I'M TRAPPED BETWEEN
SMOKE AND FIRE.



AND I AM
TERRIFIED.



WAH!



WHOA,
LADY! CALM
DOWN!
GOOD
GUYS HERE!

OH THANK
GOD!



CAN
YOU WALK ALL
RIGHT?

Y-YEAH?

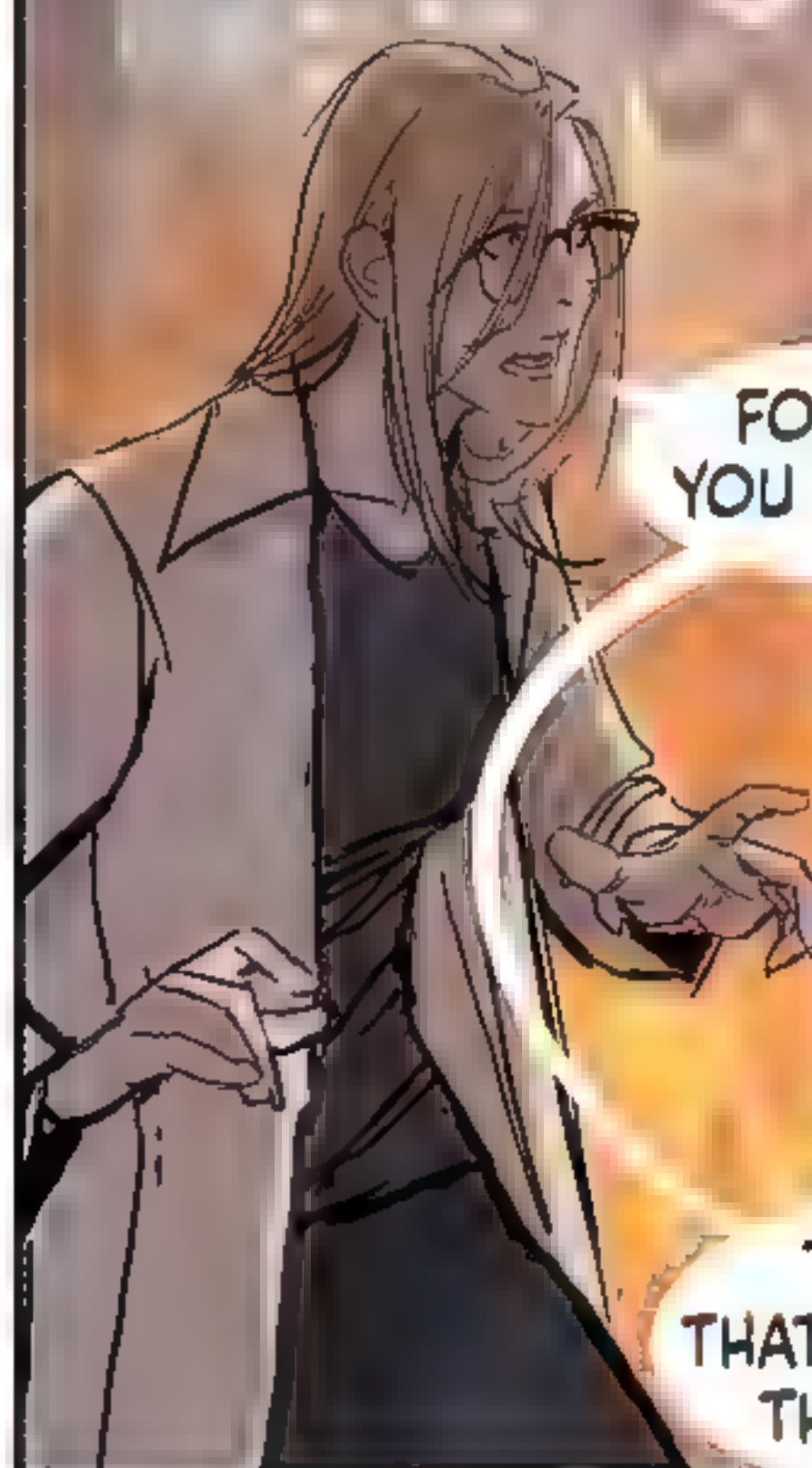
GOOD. I'LL
NEED YOU TO KEEP
YOUR HEAD DOWN AND
FOLLOW US! CAN YOU
DO THAT?

FOLLOW
YOU WHERE?

THE
FUCK OUTTA
HERE.

WE'RE
GOING FOR THE
SUBWAY ENTRANCE
AROUND THE
CORNER.

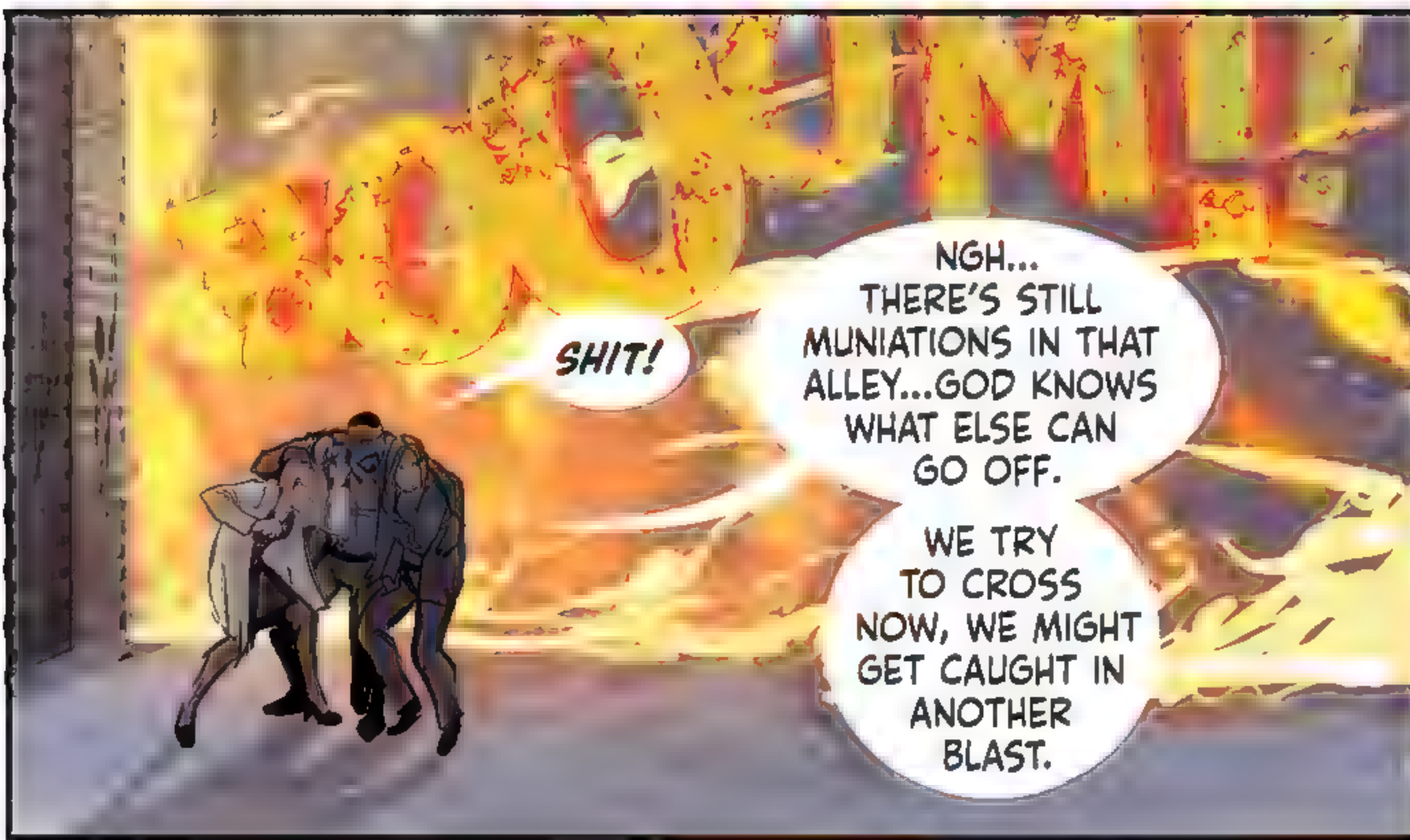
THAT'S...
THAT'S ACROSS
THE ROAD?



SHIT!

NGH...
THERE'S STILL
MUNITIONS IN THAT
ALLEY...GOD KNOWS
WHAT ELSE CAN
GO OFF.

WE TRY
TO CROSS
NOW, WE MIGHT
GET CAUGHT IN
ANOTHER
BLAST.



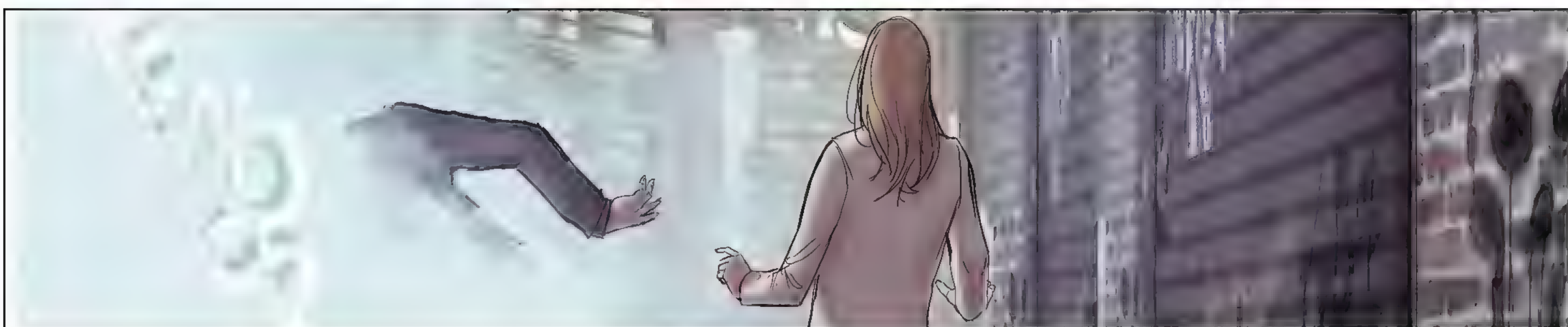
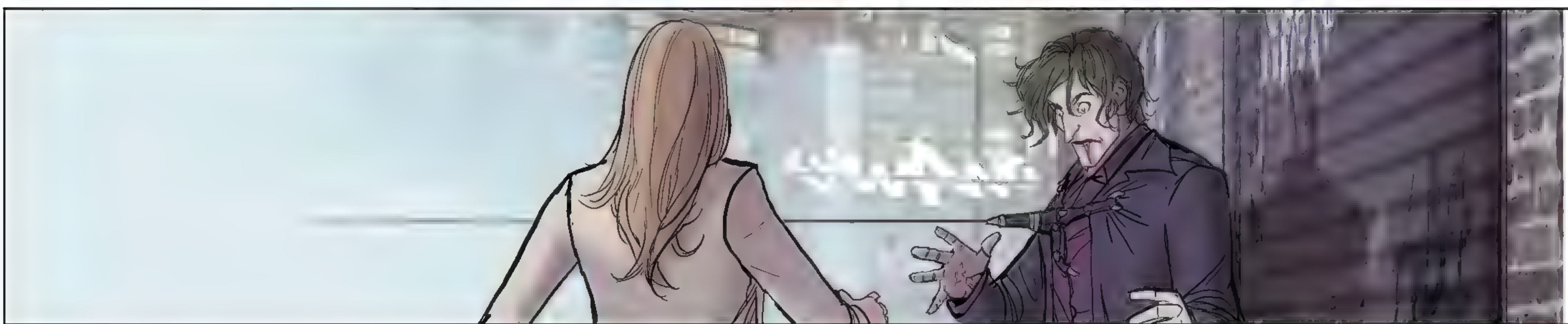
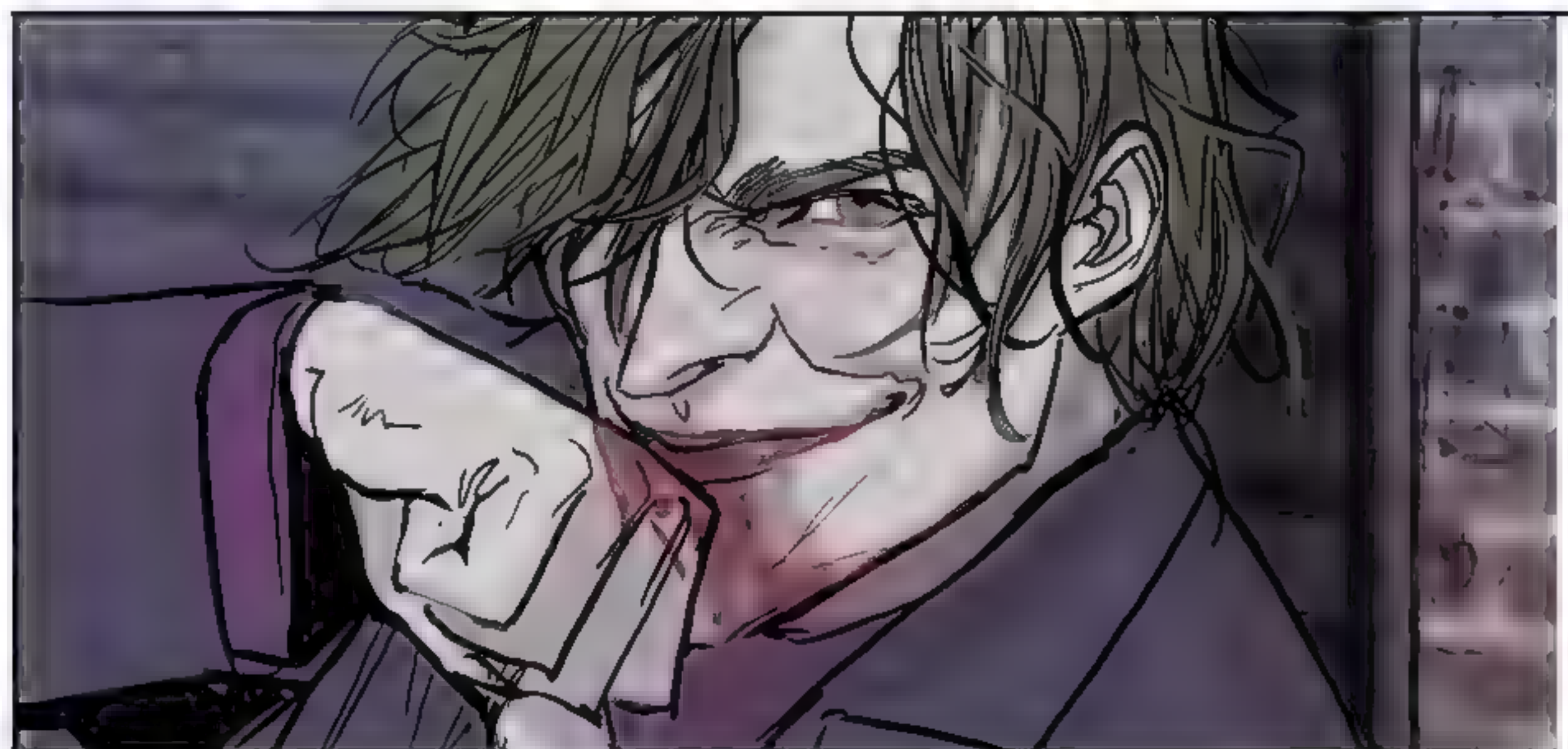
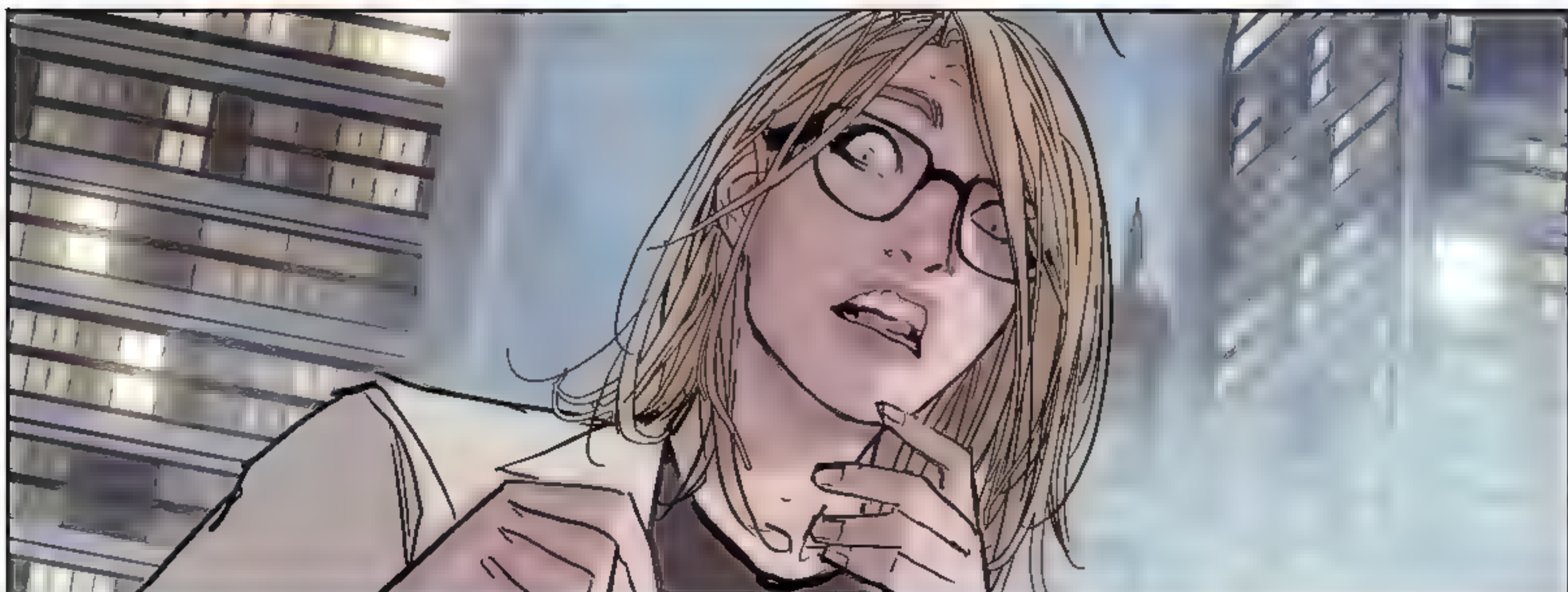
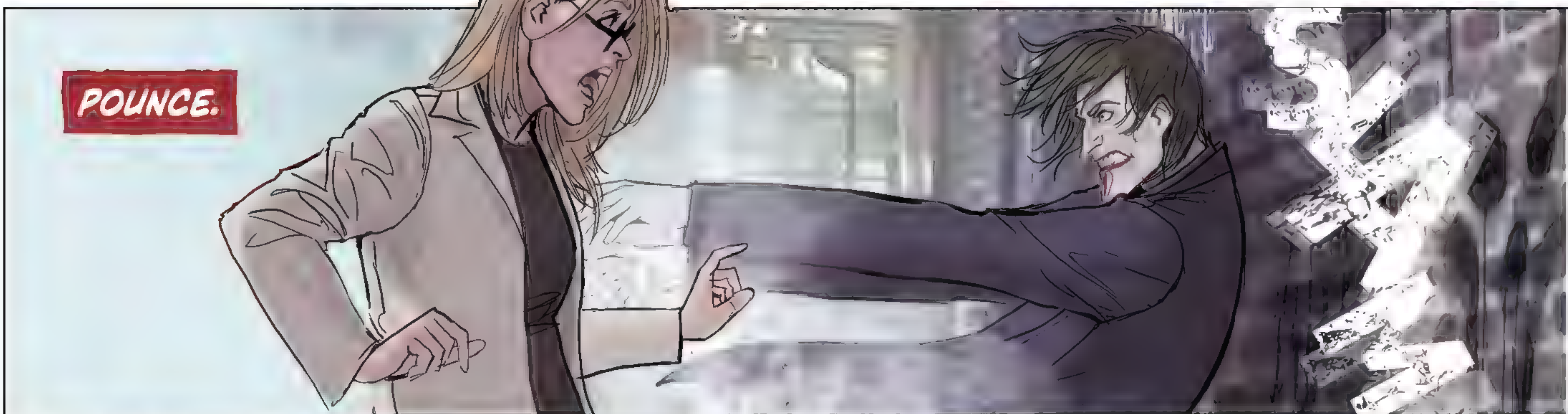
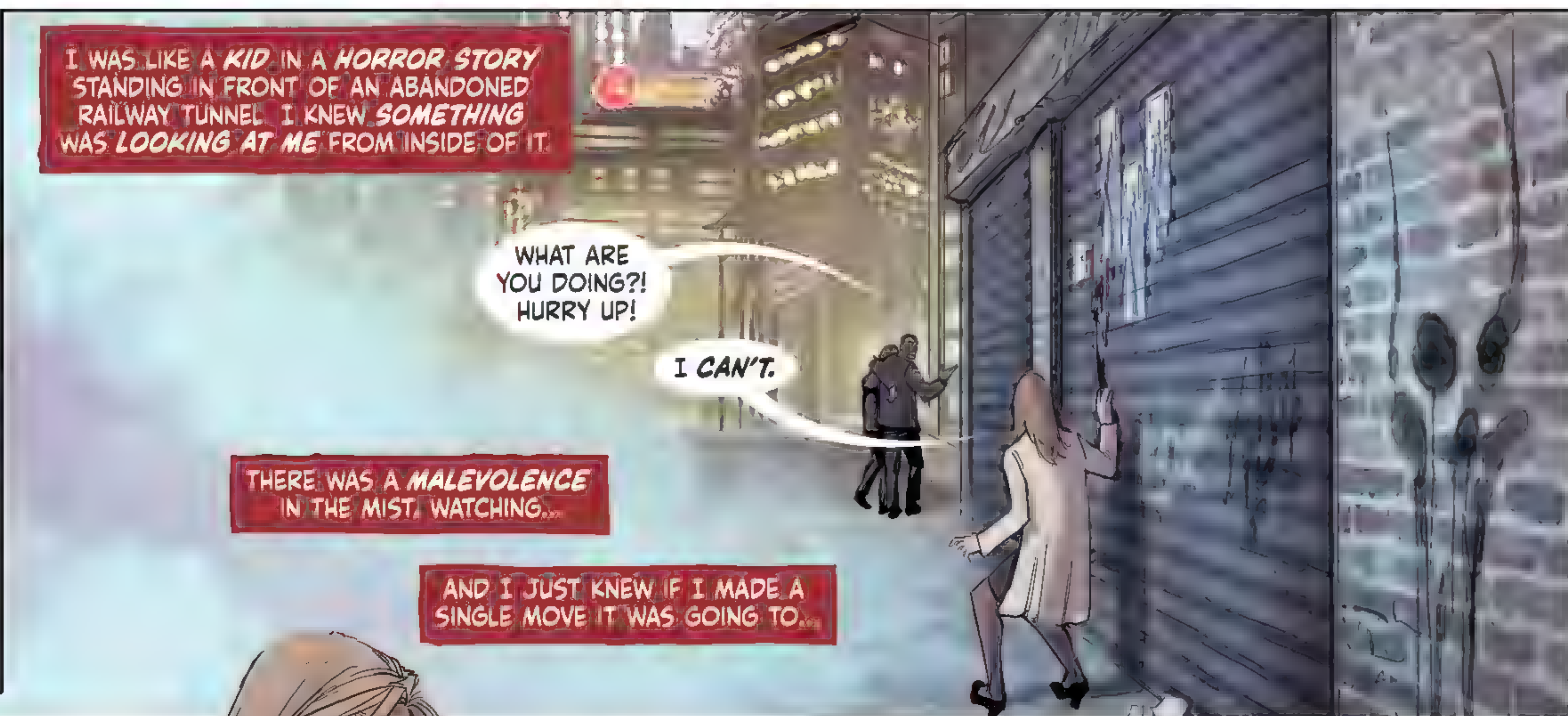
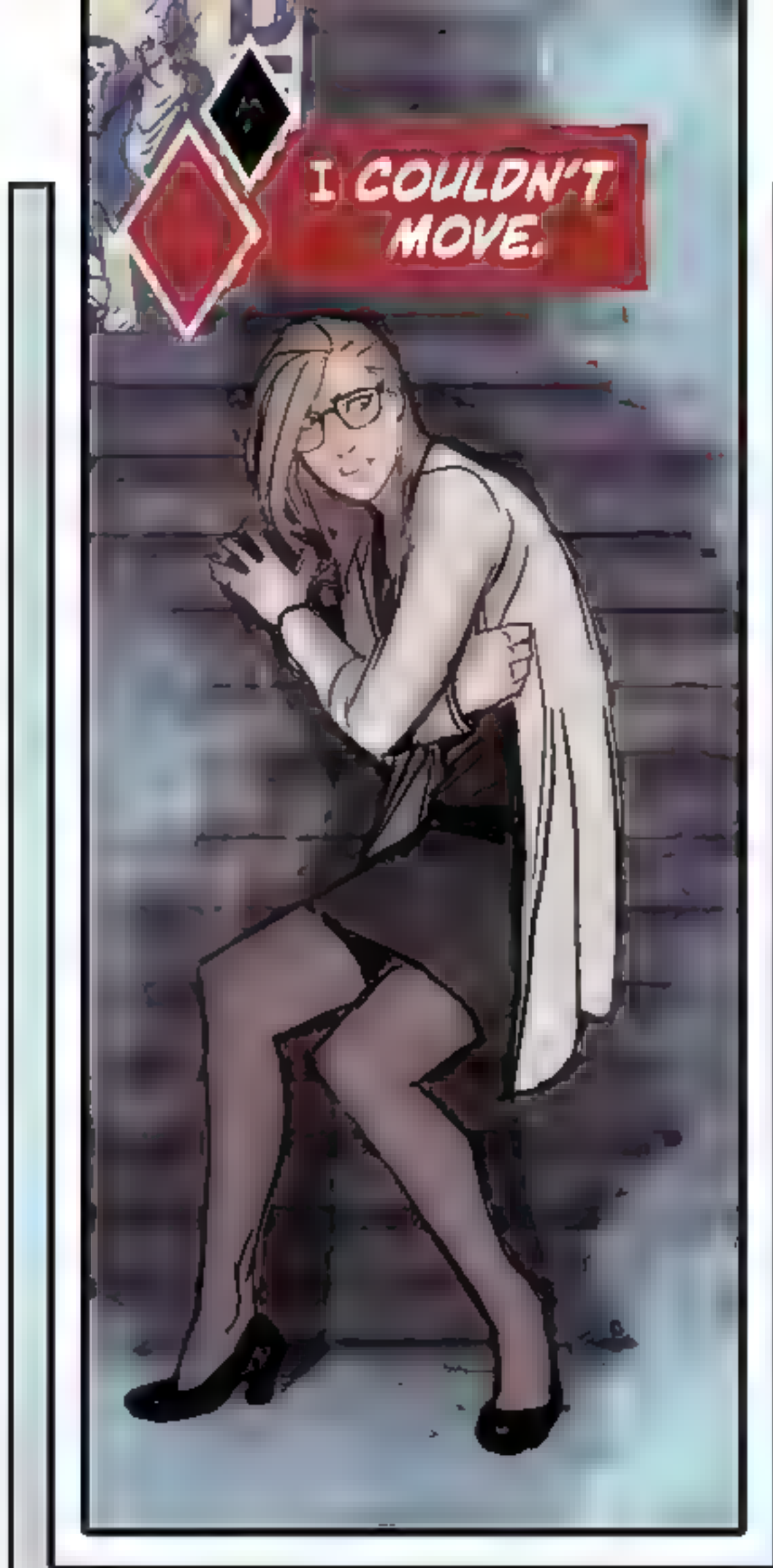
OKAY, CHANGE OF PLANS! THIS
WAY! STICK TO THE WALL AND
STAY LOW!

CAN'T YOU
CALL BACKUP OR
SOMETHING?

LADY,
WE WERE THE
BACKUP!







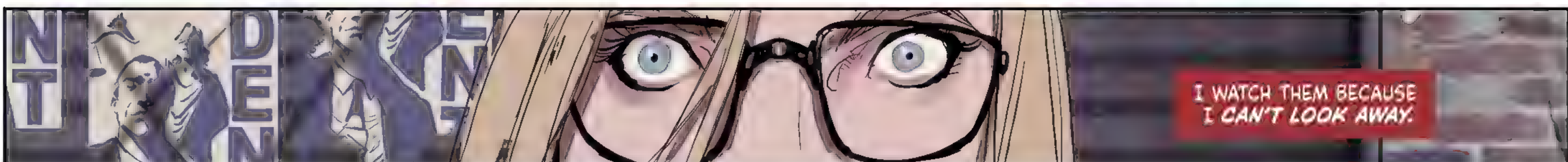
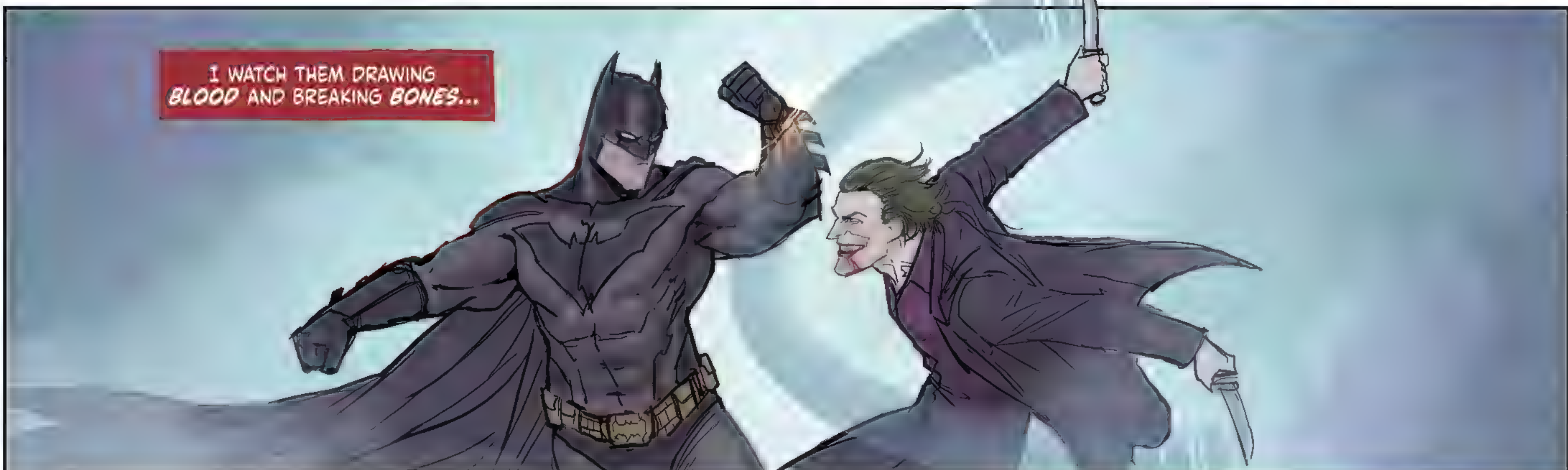
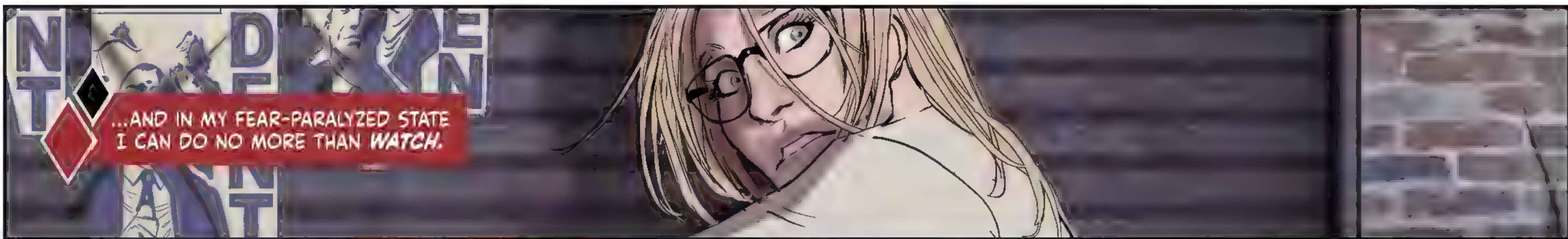


THERE ARE NO MORE GUNSHOTS, AND YET
THIS *SILENCE* FEELS EVEN MORE *TERRIFYING*.

IT IS A SILENCE OF
ANTICIPATION...

...LIKE THE MOMENT JUST AFTER A
FLASH OF LIGHTNING IN THE DISTANCE.

AND THEN IT COMES. A *CRACK* IN THE AIR,
A SOUND LIKE A *MASSIVE* FLAG FIGHTING A
GUST OF WIND, AND FOLLOWING IT, A
SINISTER LAUGH...





THEY, HOWEVER, PAY
NO ATTENTION TO ME.



IN FACT, THEIR WORK
WITH ME IS *DONE*.



THEY GRANT ME THEIR GIFT OF *FEAR* AND
RESTLESS NIGHTS... AND THEN THEY LEAVE.

AND I THINK, "I SHOULD LEAVE TOO. MY LEGS
ARE MY OWN AGAIN AND I SHOULD JUST..."



RUN



BUT I DON'T. AND I'M
NOT THE ONLY ONE.

A GUST OF WIND CLEARS ENOUGH
OF THE SMOKE FOR ME TO SEE
OTHERS SIMILARLY TRANSFIXED BY
THE MADNESS OF THE MOMENT.



I SHOULD BE
RUNNING AWAY.

WE ALL SHOULD.

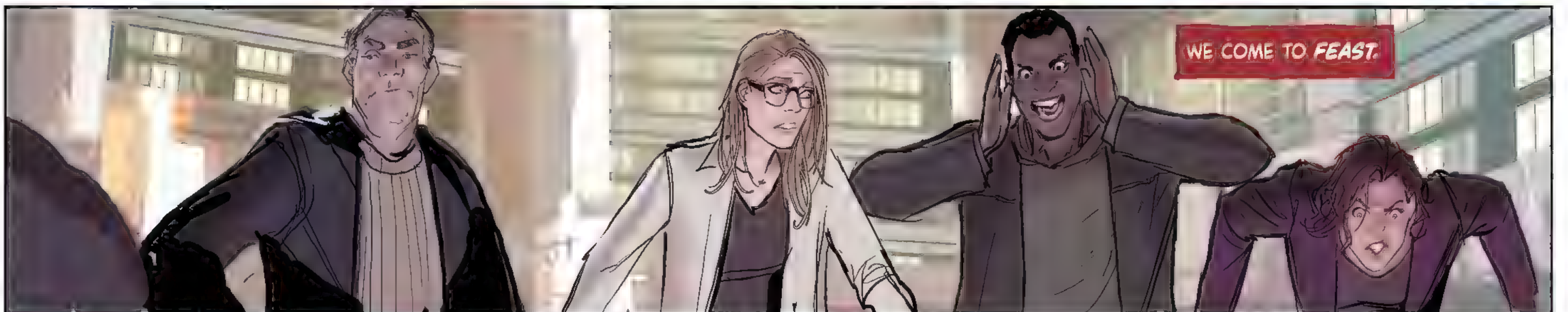
INSTEAD, WE RUSH TO THE
RAILING TO SEE THE SPECTACLE,
LIKE A **BLOODTHIRSTY CROWD**
OF ANCIENT ROMANS.



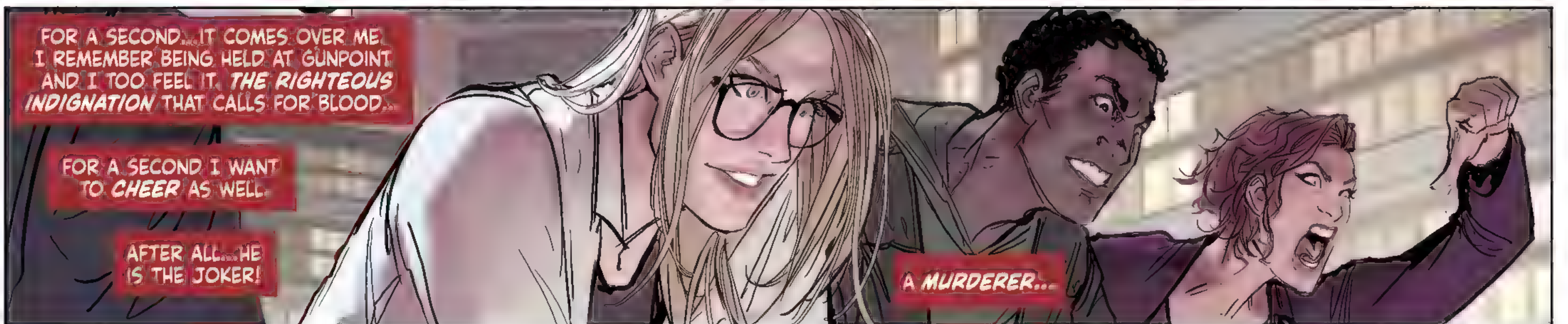
WE COME TO WATCH...



WE COME TO CHEER...



WE COME TO FEAST.



FOR A SECOND... IT COMES OVER ME.
I REMEMBER BEING HELD AT GUNPOINT
AND I TOO FEEL IT. **THE RIGHTEOUS**
INDIGNATION THAT CALLS FOR BLOOD.

FOR A SECOND I WANT
TO **CHEER** AS WELL.

AFTER ALL... HE
IS THE JOKER!

A **MURDERER...**

BUT I'M SNAPPED
OUT OF IT BY A
STRANGE THOUGHT...

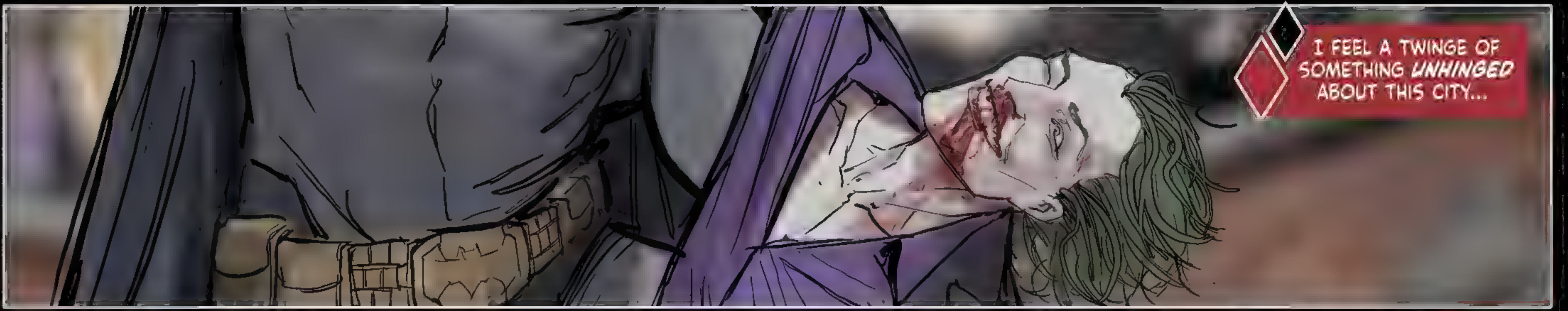
IT DROWNED OUT
THE SOUND...

THE *CHEERING*
DROWNED OUT THE
SOUND OF THE *FIST*
CONNECTING.

INSTEAD OF SICKENING
CRUNCHES, THE SOUNDS
HIS PUNCHES MADE
WERE...

FOR THE FIRST TIME
EVER, I TRULY FEEL IT.





I FEEL A TWINGE OF
SOMETHING *UNHINGED*
ABOUT THIS CITY...

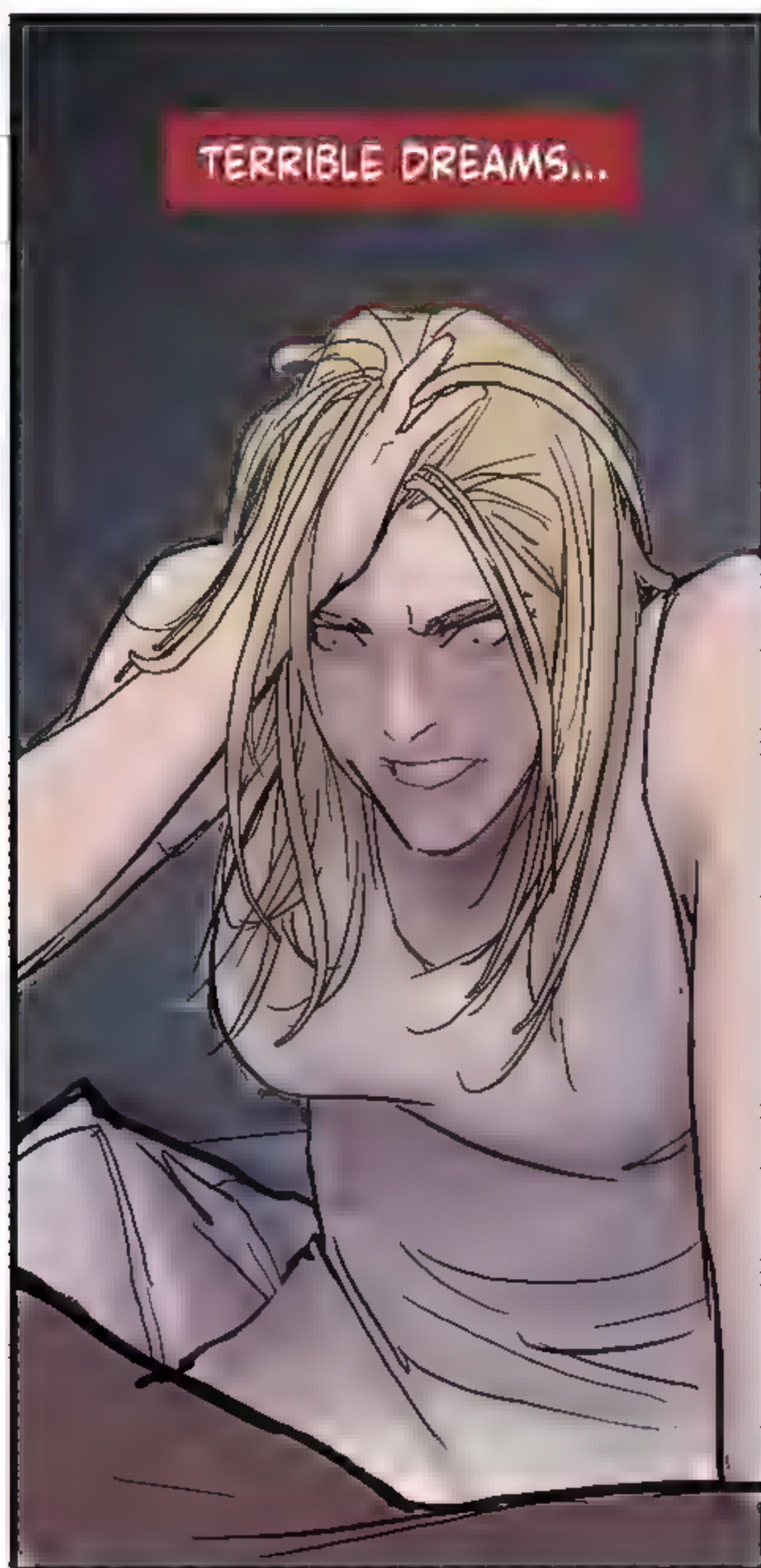


IT IS THE STUFF
OF NIGHTMARES...

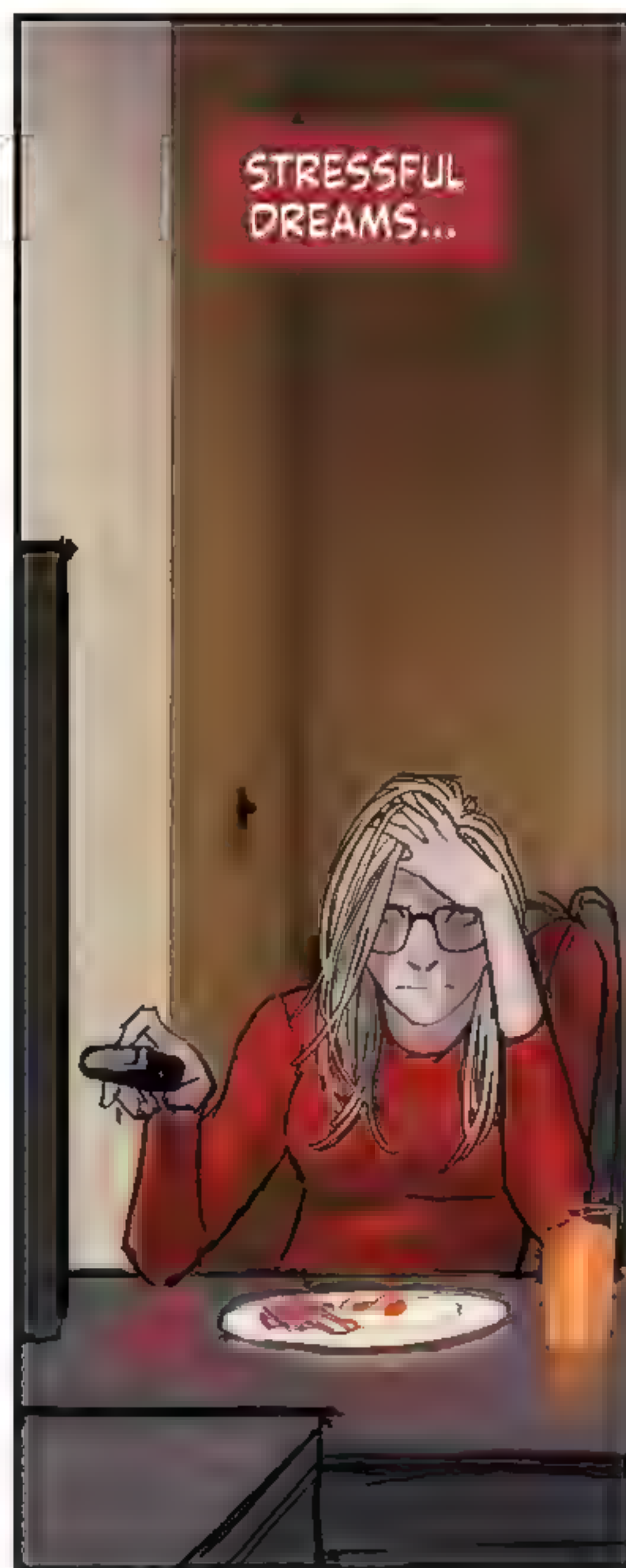
AND I WANT
TO SCREAM.



THREE DAYS PASSED AND I
AM LEFT WITH *MEMORIES*
AND *DREAMS*.



TERRIBLE DREAMS...



STRESSFUL
DREAMS...



DREAMS THAT
LINGER.

AHA
HAHAH
HA...

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY.

Gotham City.

I DECIDED TO KEEP THE EVENTS OF THAT FATEFUL NIGHT TO MYSELF.

WHO KNOWS, MAYBE IF I HAD TOLD SOMEONE ABOUT THAT NIGHT, THINGS WOULD HAVE GONE DIFFERENTLY.

MY LIFE WOULD HAVE BEEN...DIFFERENT.

BUT I KEPT QUIET. THE LAST FOUR YEARS WORKING AT THE CENTER TAUGHT ME TO KEEP MY HEAD DOWN.

TO NOT ATTRACT ATTENTION.

SEE...I HAD THIS *FLING* WITH A PROFESSOR BACK IN MY COLLEGE DAYS AND PEOPLE FOUND OUT ABOUT IT.

IT WAS ONE OF THOSE THINGS THAT TEND TO STICK TO YOU.

TEND TO...DEFINE YOU IN THE EYES OF SOME.

DIDN'T HELP THAT TWO OF THE PEOPLE WORKING AT THE CENTER HAD GONE TO SCHOOL WITH ME...

SUFFICE IT TO SAY, WORD GOT AROUND. AND I GAINED A...LET'S CALL IT A REPUTATION.

OKAY, WHO DID YOU *\$#%\$* TO GET IT?

HEY!

YOU KNOW WHAT? AFTER MY WEEKEND I'VE GOT *ZERO PATIENCE* FOR YOUR BULLSHIT, PAULINE!

OH, DON'T YOU GIVE ME THAT *CRAP!* HOW DID YOU *DO IT?* DID YOU *\$#%\$* SOMEONE FROM THE FINANCE BOARD?

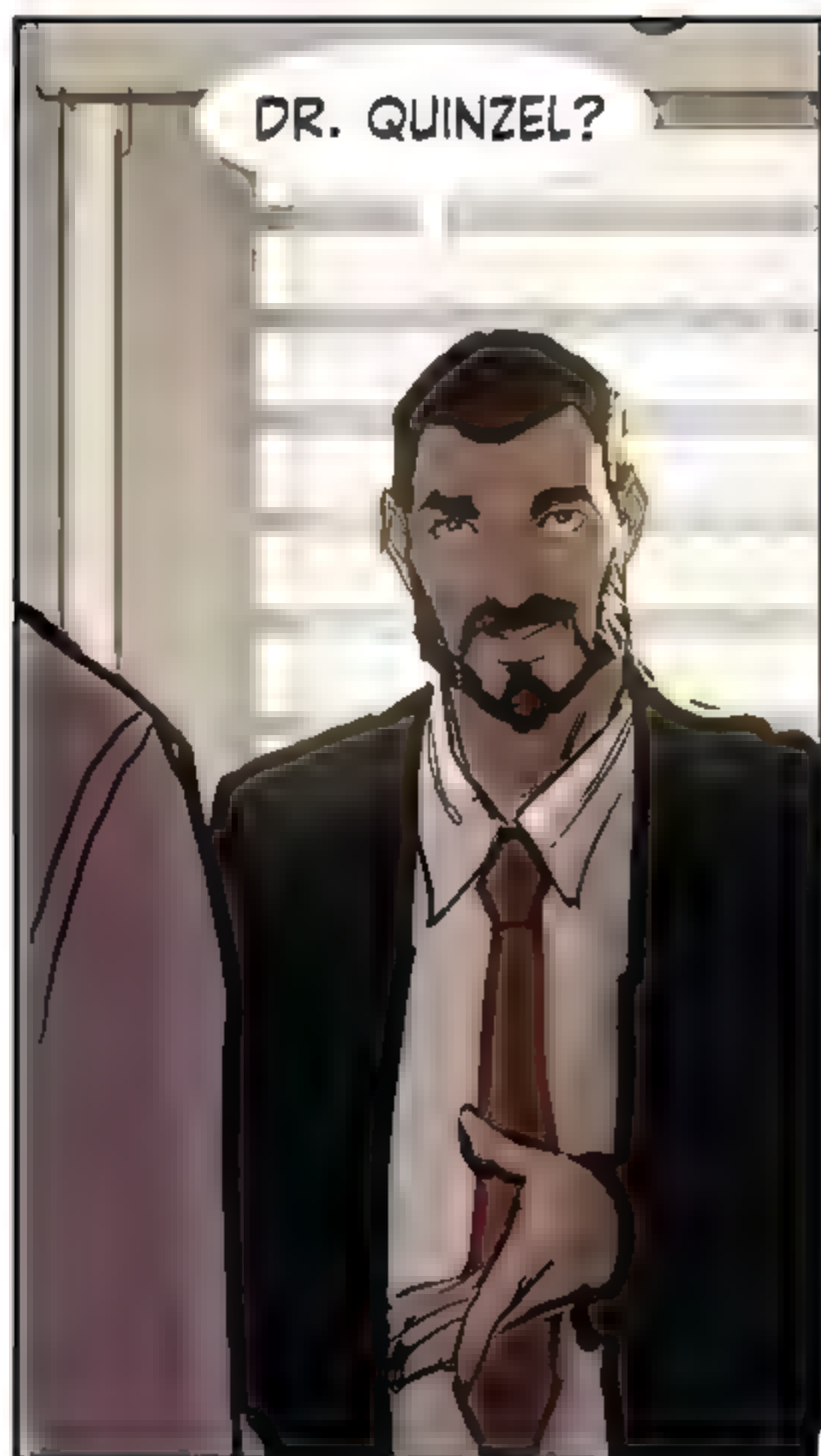
QUINZEL, DR. MATHEWS'S OFFICE, NOW!

UH, DR. MATHEWS?



OH, I'M SORRY,
I DIDN'T KNOW THERE WAS
SOMEONE ELSE IN HERE. I'LL
WAIT OUTSIDE.

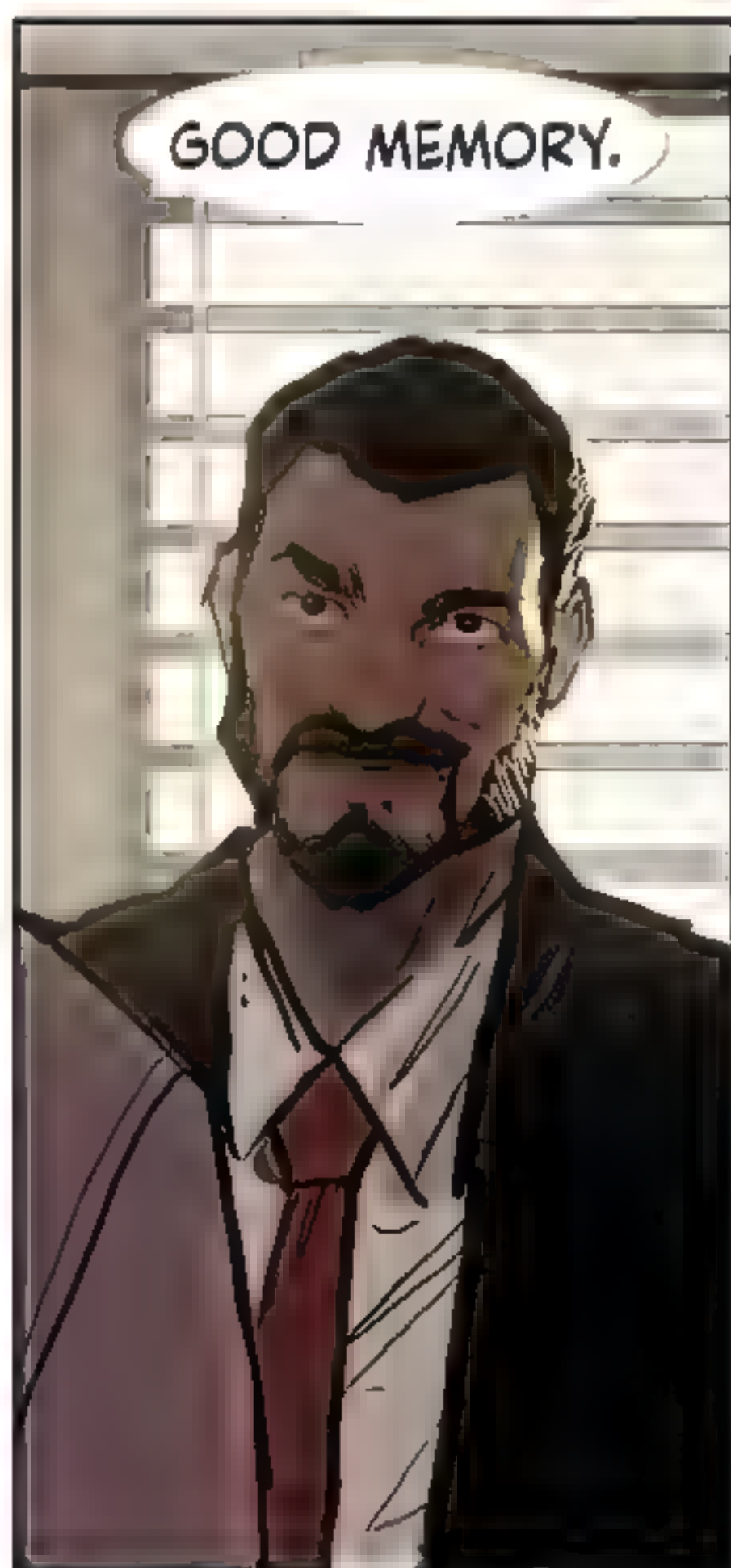
NO, NO,
QUINZEL! COME IN.
WE'VE BEEN *WAITING*
FOR YOU!



DR. QUINZEL?



HARLEEN, PLEASE!
HEY, I *REMEMBER*
YOU. YOU WERE AT MY
PRESENTATION...AND
THEN YOU *LEFT*.



GOOD MEMORY.



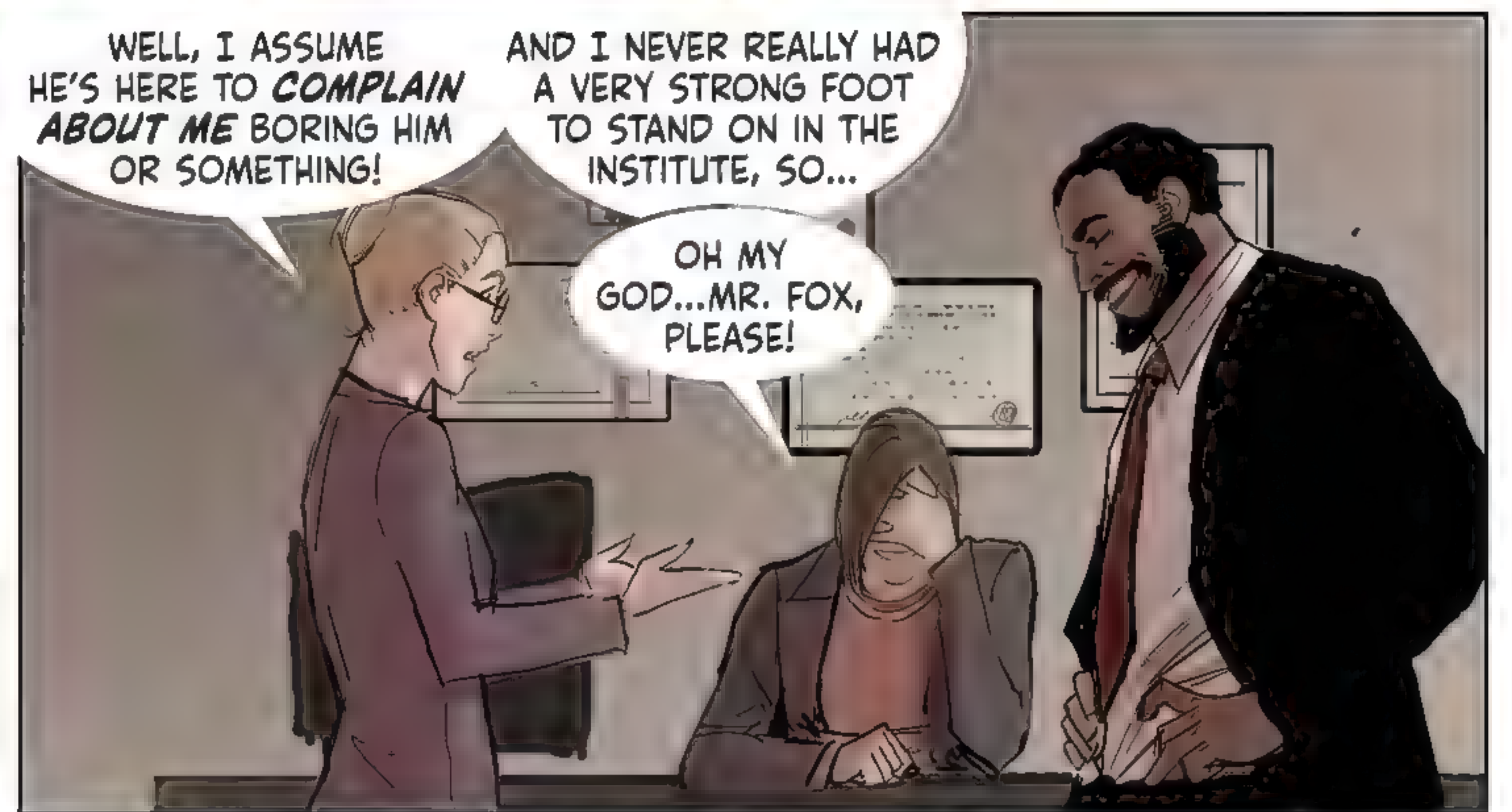
I'M GOOD WITH FACES. PLUS
I TEND TO REMEMBER PEOPLE
LEAVING MY PANEL WHEN I'M
TRYING TO PRESENT MY
LIFE'S WORK.
ALL 28
OF THEM...



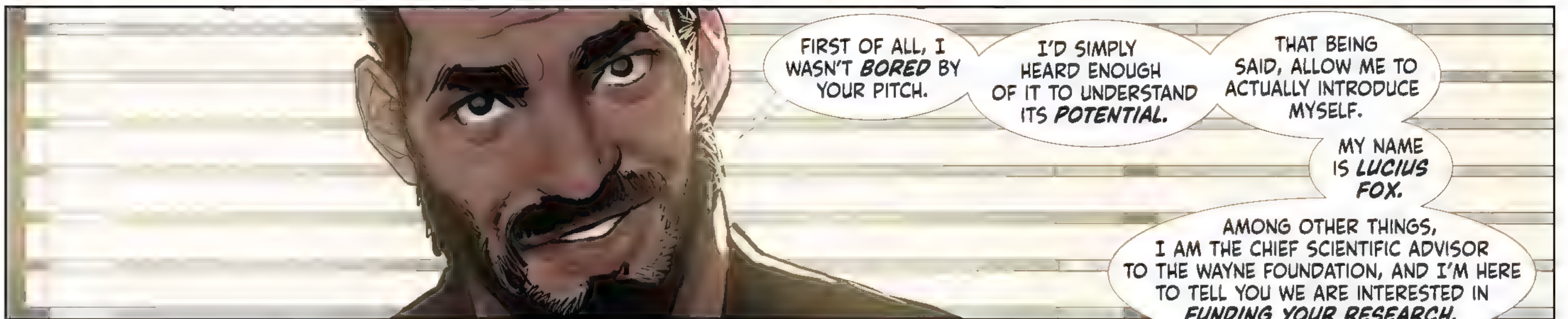
UH...SORRY
I'M RAMBLING. I TEND
TO DO THAT WHEN I'M
NERVOUS.



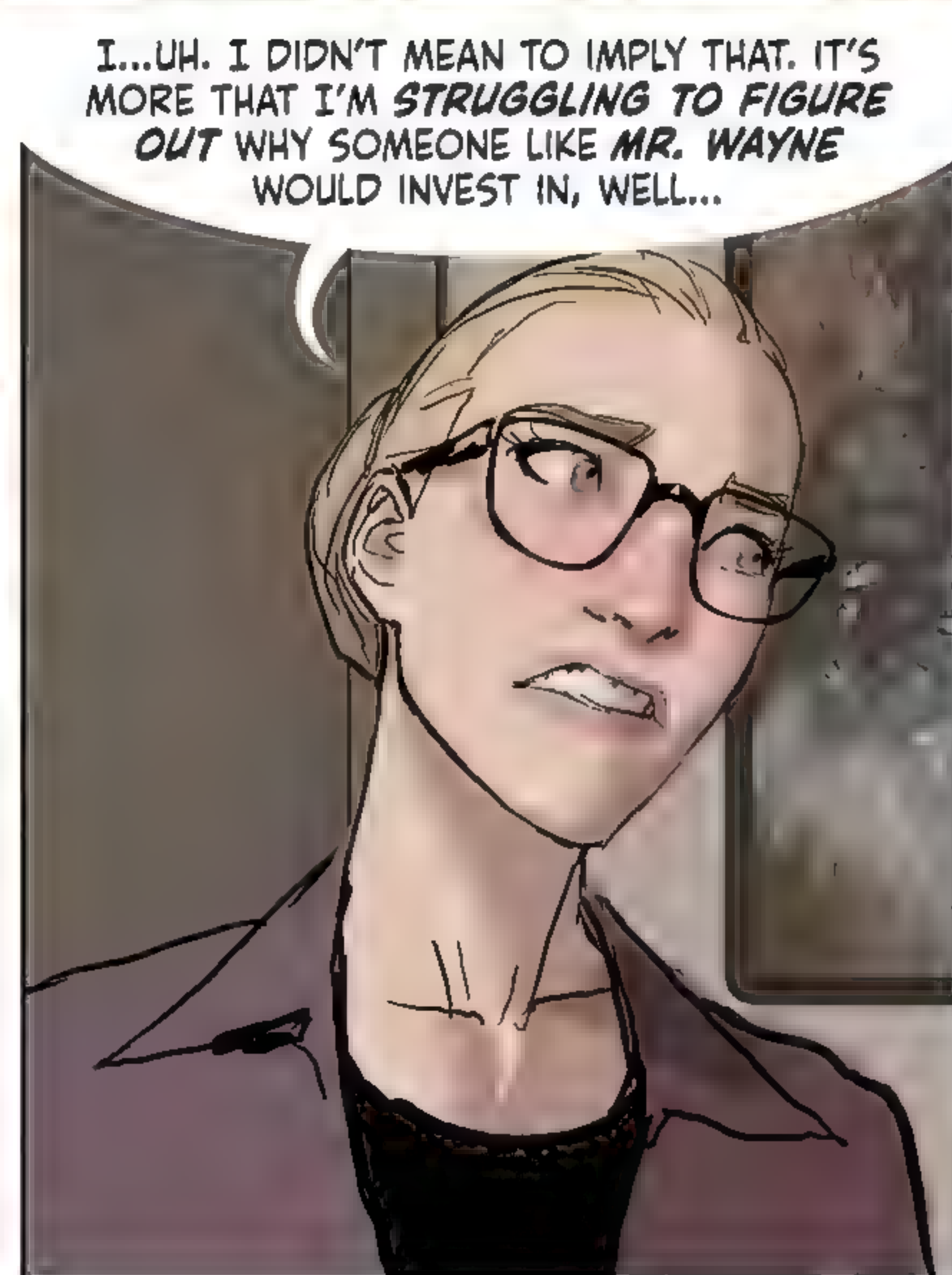
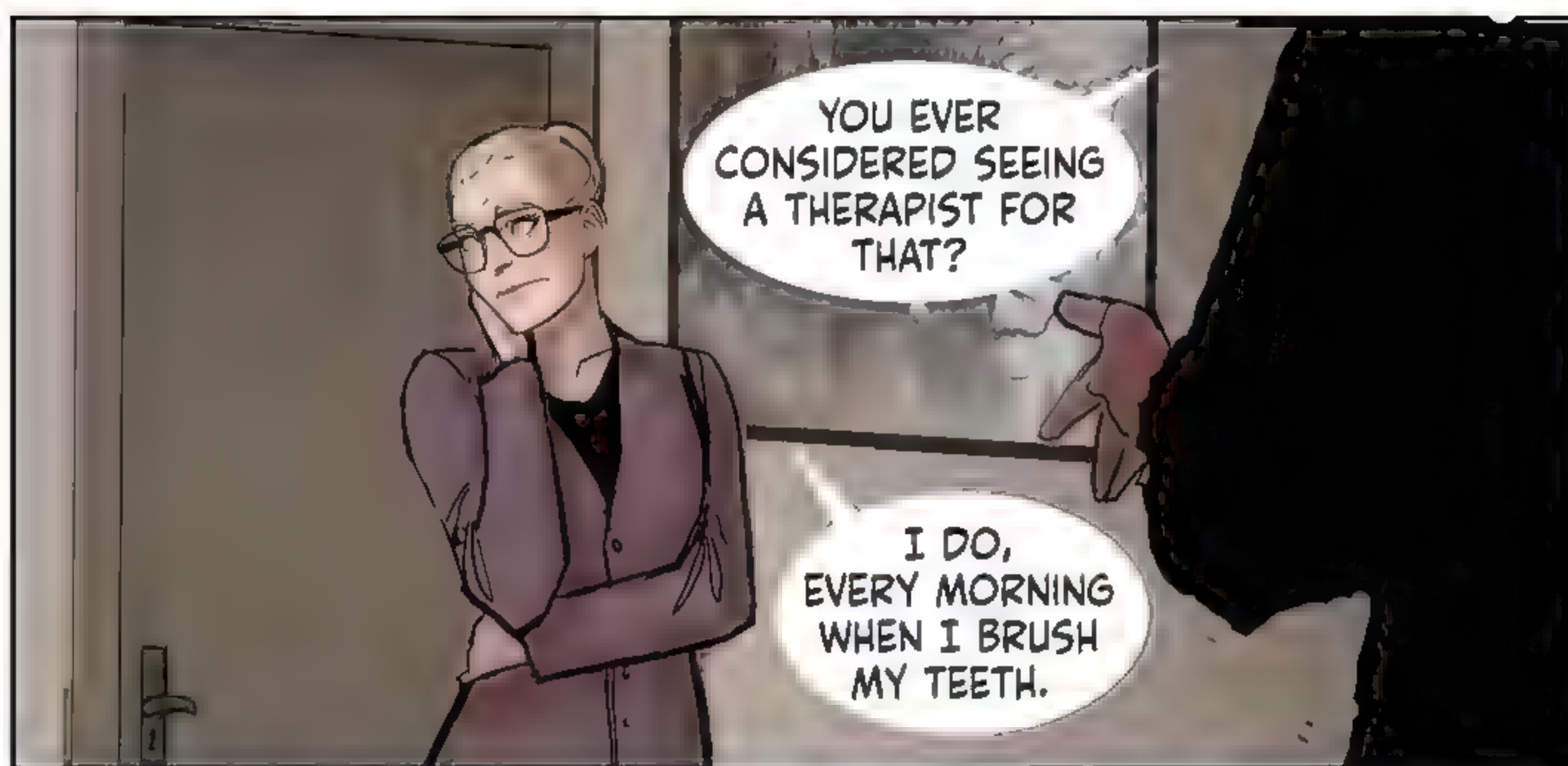
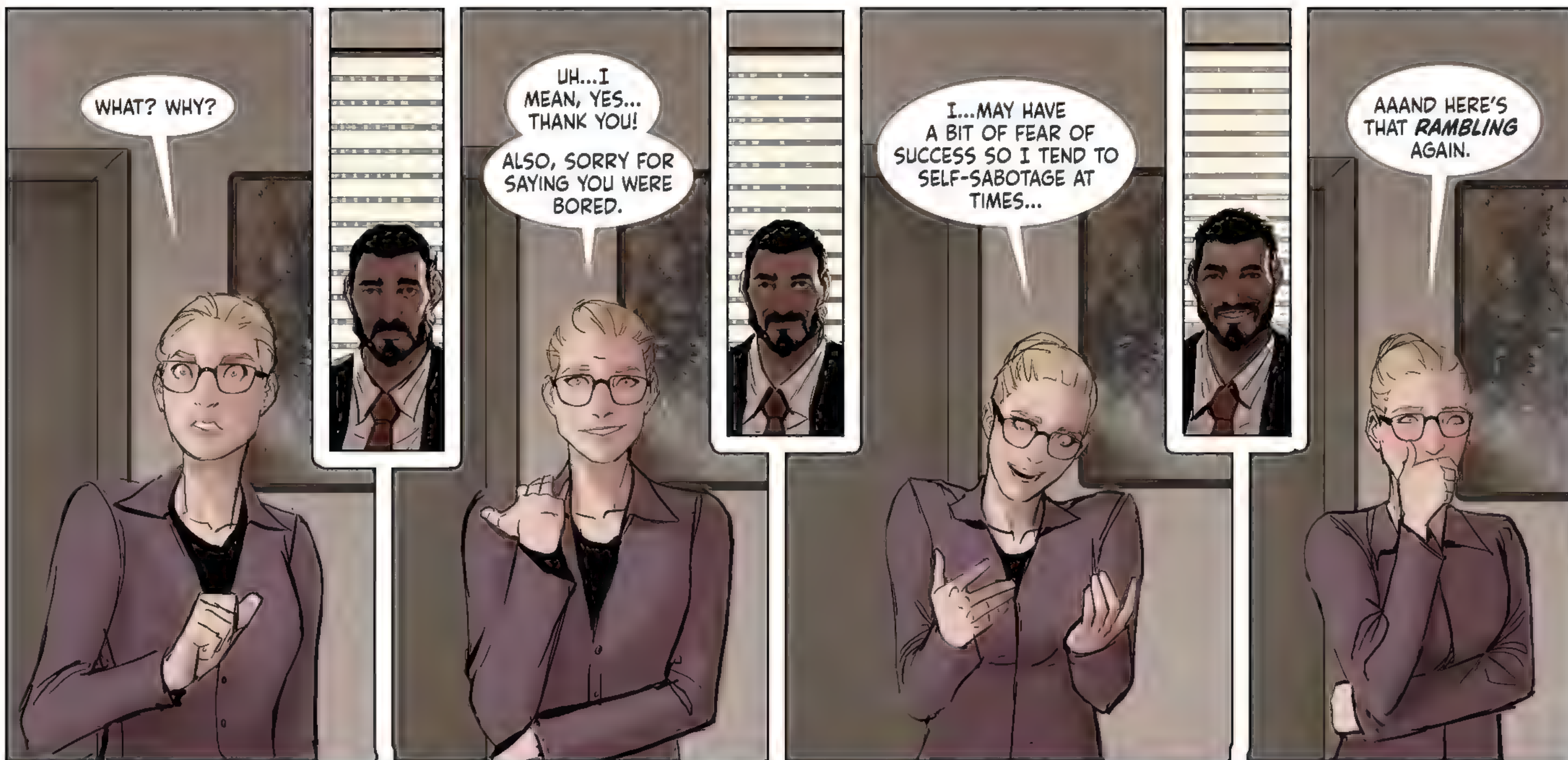
AM I
FIRED?
WHAT?

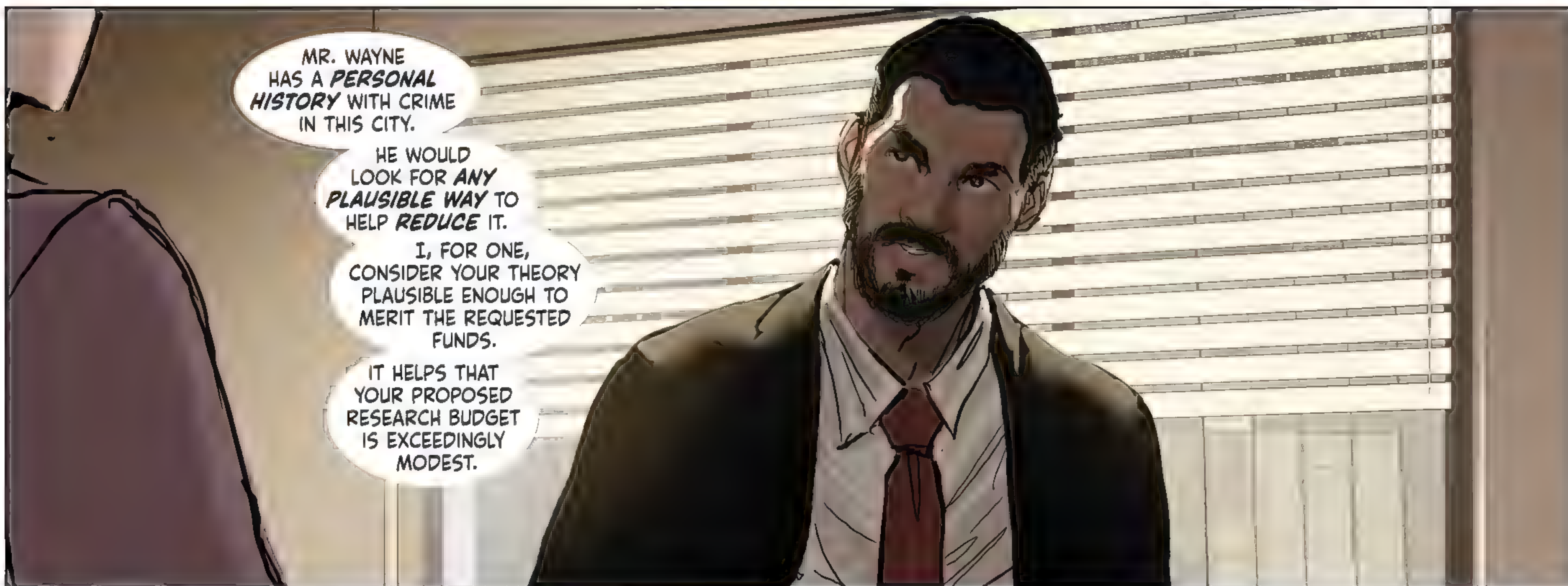


WELL, I ASSUME
HE'S HERE TO *COMPLAIN*
ABOUT ME BORING HIM
OR SOMETHING!
AND I NEVER REALLY HAD
A VERY STRONG FOOT
TO STAND ON IN THE
INSTITUTE, SO...
OH MY
GOD...MR. FOX,
PLEASE!



FIRST OF ALL, I
WASN'T *BORED* BY
YOUR PITCH.
I'D SIMPLY
HEARD ENOUGH
OF IT TO UNDERSTAND
ITS *POTENTIAL*.
THAT BEING
SAID, ALLOW ME TO
ACTUALLY INTRODUCE
MYSELF.
MY NAME
IS *LUCIUS*
FOX.
AMONG OTHER THINGS,
I AM THE CHIEF SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR
TO THE WAYNE FOUNDATION, AND I'M HERE
TO TELL YOU WE ARE INTERESTED IN
FUNDING YOUR RESEARCH.





MR. WAYNE
HAS A **PERSONAL**
HISTORY WITH CRIME
IN THIS CITY.

HE WOULD
LOOK FOR **ANY**
PLAUSIBLE WAY TO
HELP **REDUCE** IT.

I, FOR ONE,
CONSIDER YOUR THEORY
PLAUSIBLE ENOUGH TO
MERIT THE REQUESTED
FUNDS.

IT HELPS THAT
YOUR PROPOSED
RESEARCH BUDGET
IS EXCEEDINGLY
MODEST.



I MEAN...YEAH. THE ONLY
REAL **COST** WILL BE THE
SECOND PHASE WITH THE
BRAIN ACTIVITY
NEUROIMAGING.

EVERYTHING
BEFORE THAT
IS INTERVIEW
WORK.

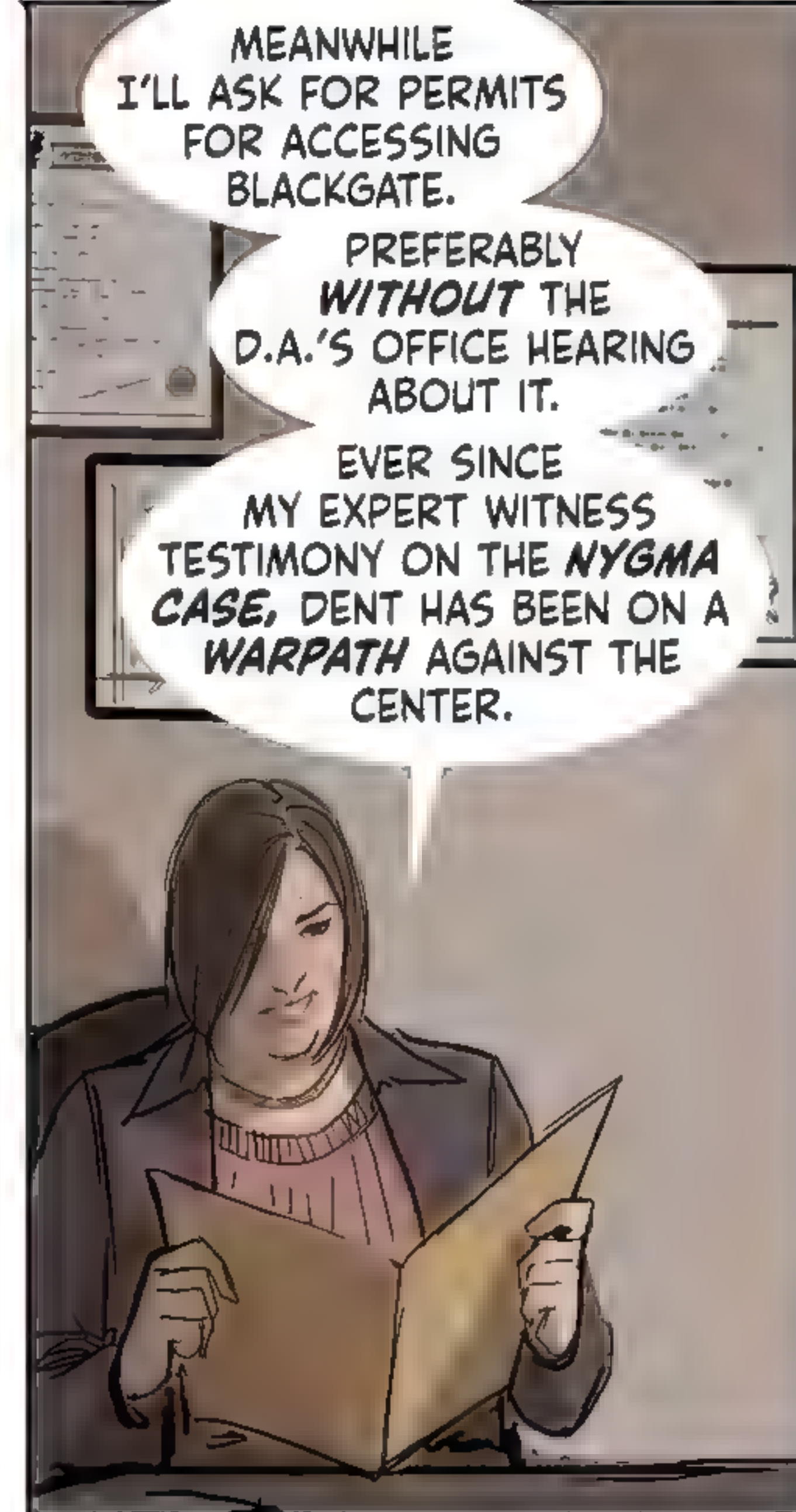


WHICH MEANS...OH GOD, NOW I GOTTA FIND
OUT HOW TO ACTUALLY **GET ACCESS**
TO ARKHAM, BLACKGATE, AND
THE GOTHAM POLICE...

RELAX,
DOCTOR.

ARKHAM SHOULDN'T
BE A **PROBLEM**. MR. WAYNE
HAS **FUNDED** ITS REPAIRS
AND SECURITY, SO THEY
OWE US.

SAME GOES
FOR THE GOTHAM PD.
WE CAN MAKE SOME
CALLS.



MEANWHILE
I'LL ASK FOR PERMITS
FOR ACCESSING
BLACKGATE.

PREFERABLY
WITHOUT THE
D.A.'S OFFICE HEARING
ABOUT IT.

EVER SINCE
MY EXPERT WITNESS
TESTIMONY ON THE **NYGMA**
CASE, DENT HAS BEEN ON A
WARPATH AGAINST THE
CENTER.



WELL, I SUPPOSE THAT'S
SETTLED THEN. GOOD LUCK,
DOCTOR. PLEASURE
MEETING YOU!



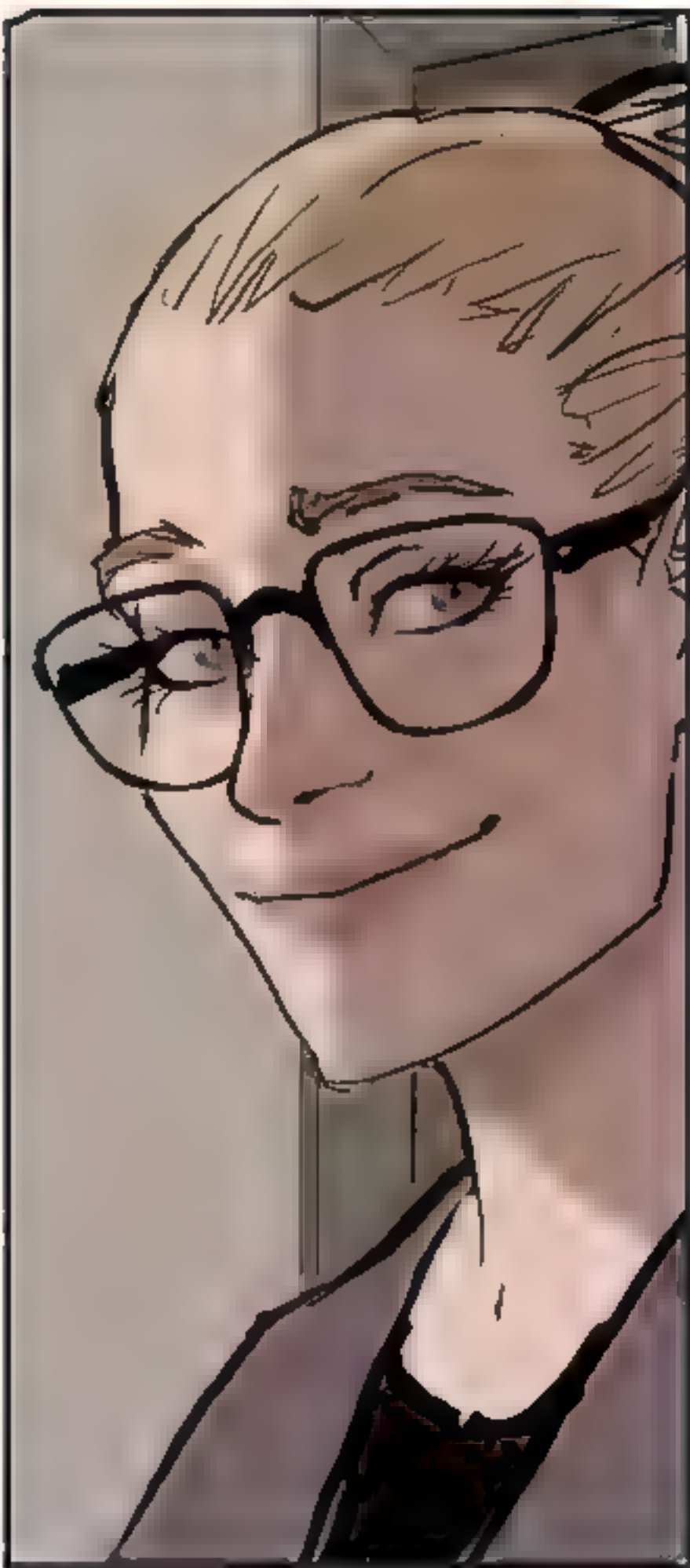
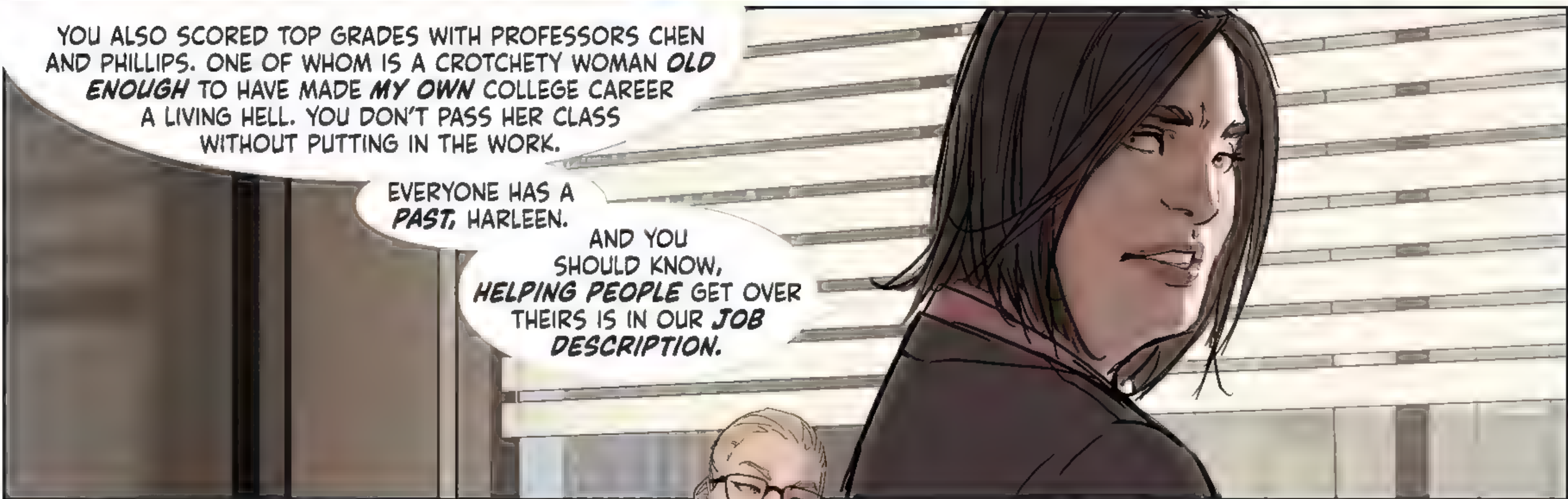
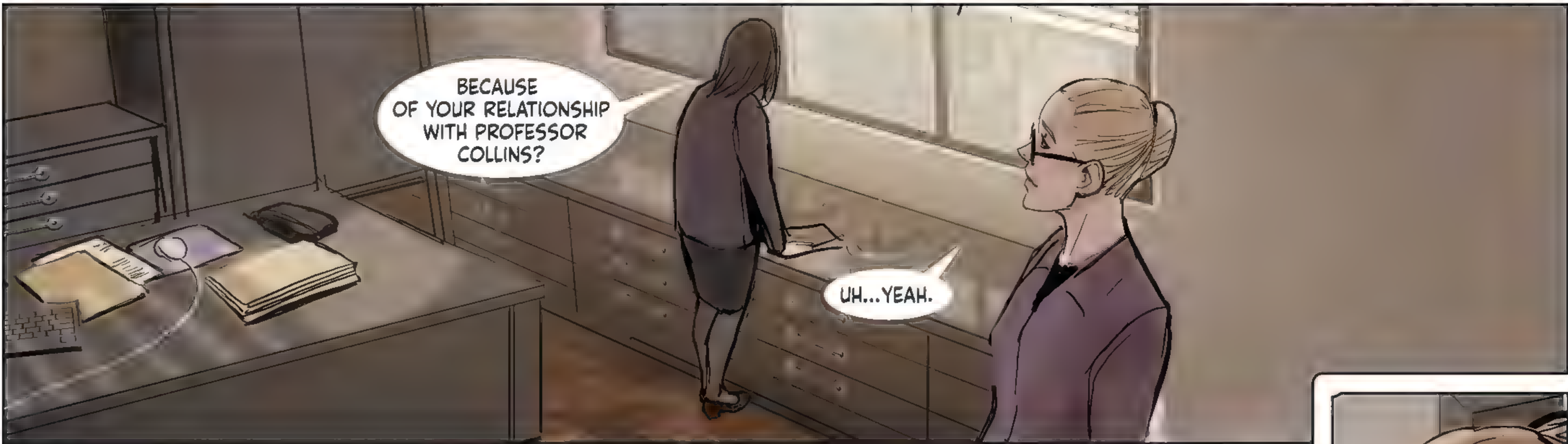
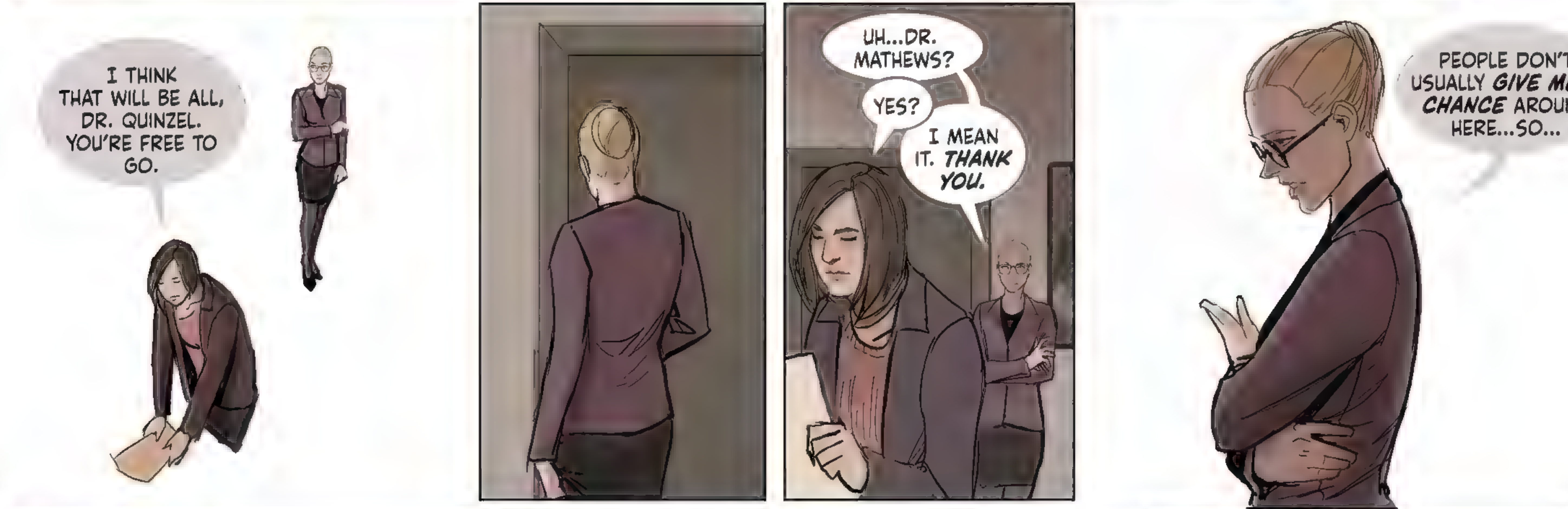
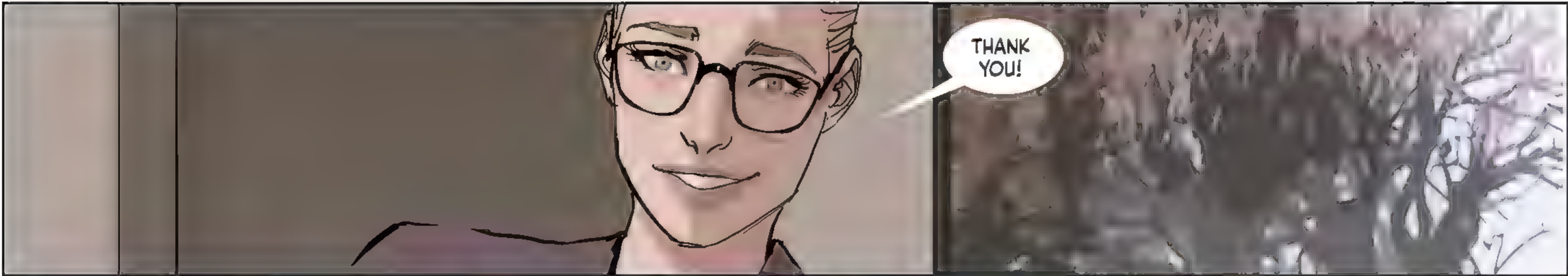
Y-YEAH...

UH...LIKEWISE!



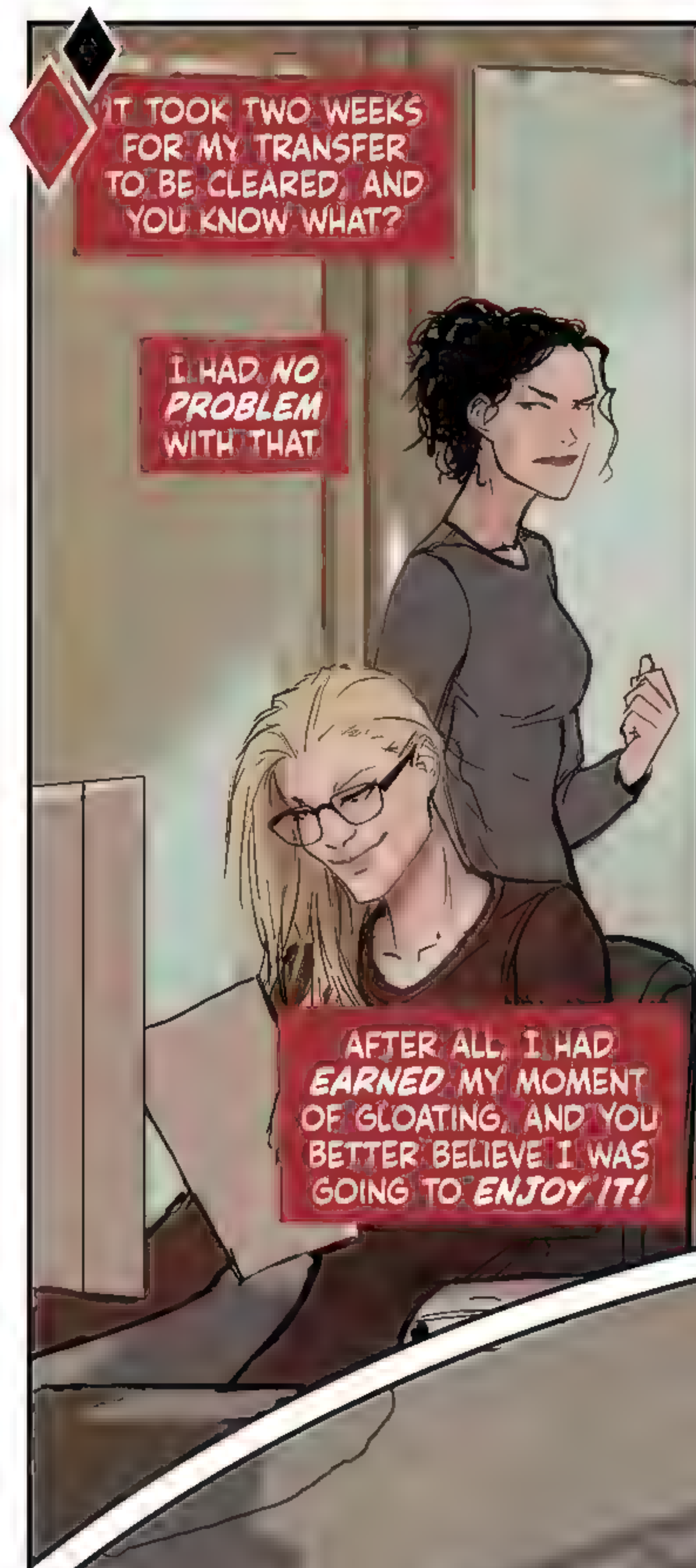
WELL, I'LL GET IN CONTACT WITH **HUGO**
STRANGE AT ARKHAM AND MAKE
SURE HE'S UP TO DATE
WITH ALL OF THIS.

I DON'T THINK
STRANGE WILL BE **OVERLY**
ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT WAYNE
PUSHING A STAFF MEMBER ON HIM.
THE LEAST I CAN DO IS GREASE
THE WHEELS BY **VOUCHING**
FOR YOU.



AND THERE IT WAS. ONE THING WENT RIGHT FOR ME, AND ONE PERSON HAD MY BACK, AND I FELT LIKE A MILLION BUCKS.





IT TOOK TWO WEEKS FOR MY TRANSFER TO BE CLEARED, AND YOU KNOW WHAT?

I HAD NO PROBLEM WITH THAT.

AFTER ALL, I HAD EARNED MY MOMENT OF GLOATING, AND YOU BETTER BELIEVE I WAS GOING TO ENJOY IT!

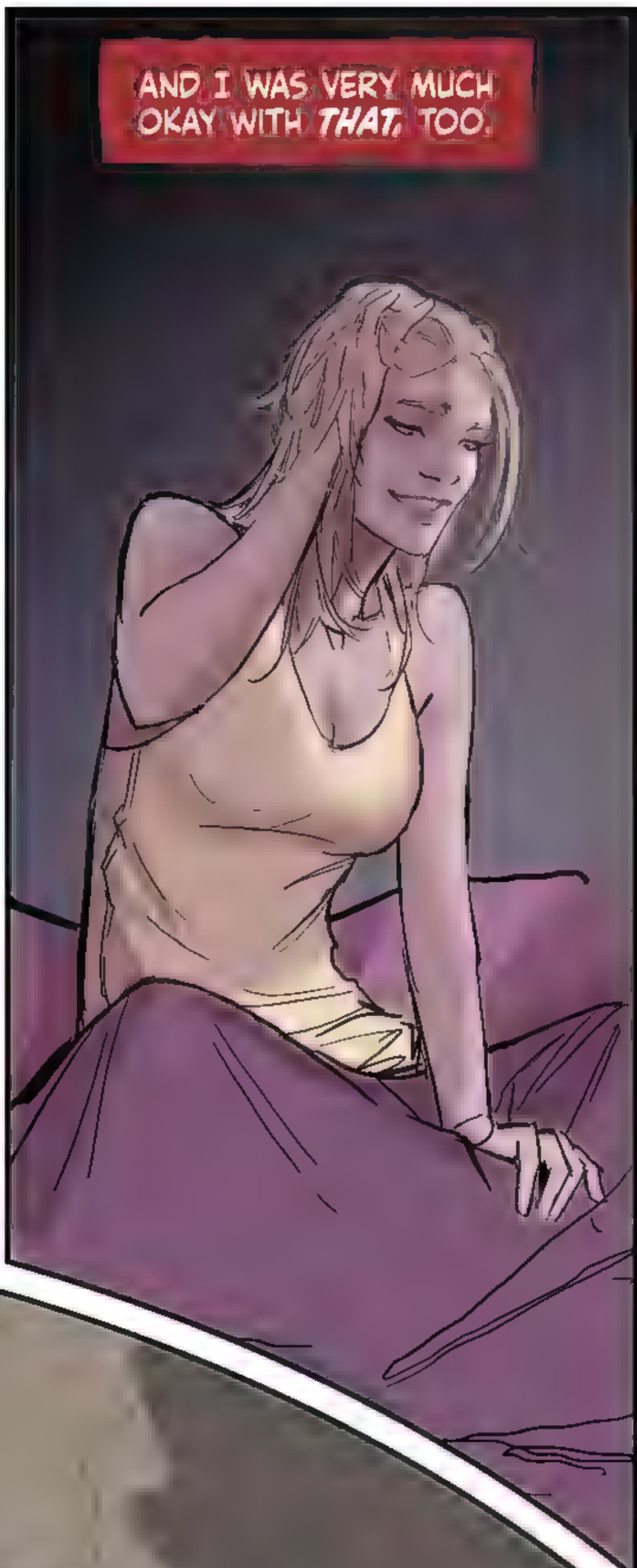


AND THAT WASN'T THE ONLY IMPROVEMENT. MY PREVIOUSLY SHIT-YOUR-PANTS-TERRIFYING NIGHTMARES SUBSIDED.

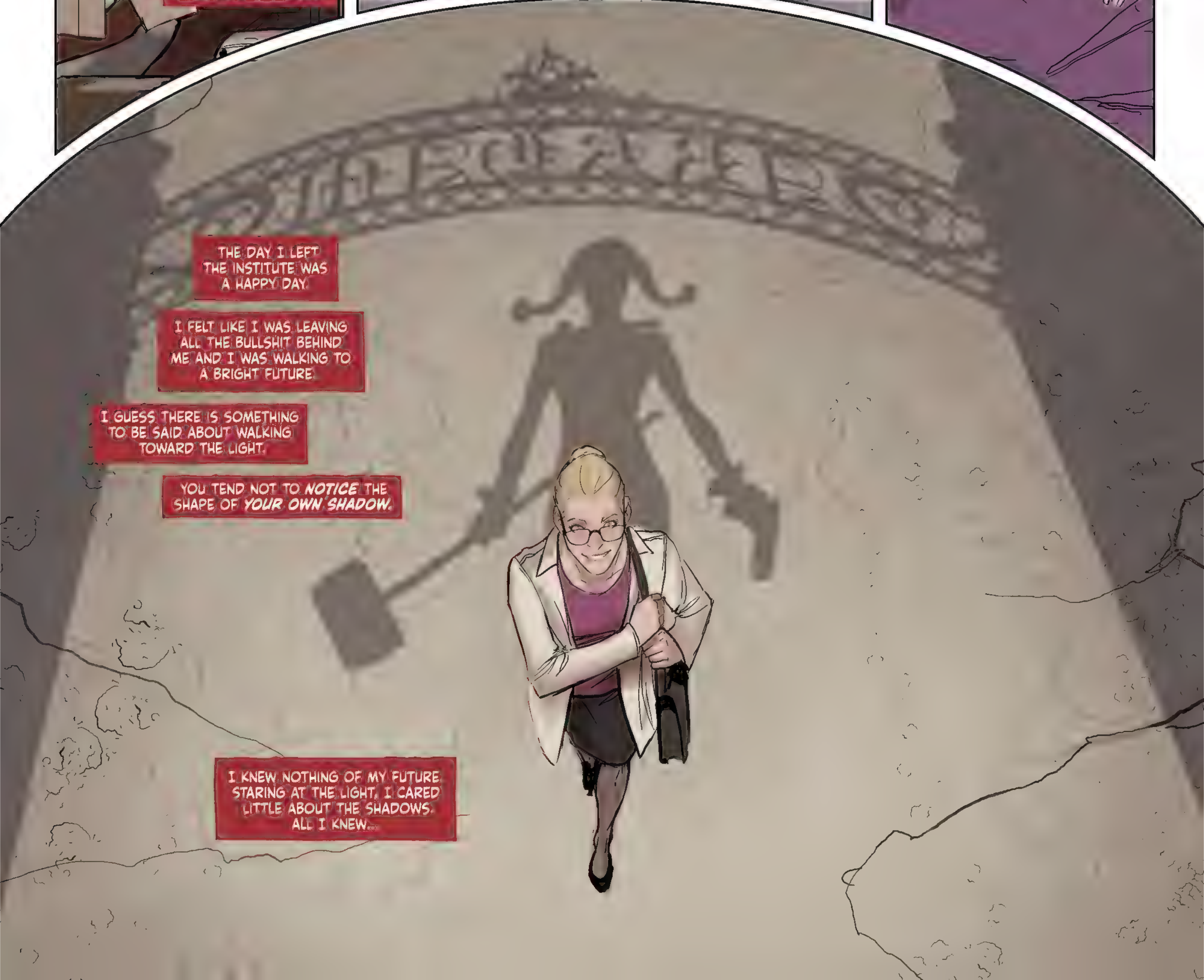


BY WEEK TWO, THEY WERE REPLACED BY BRIEF, UNSETTLING DREAMS.

IN THEM, THE MIST WAS STILL THERE, BUT THE MONSTERS SEEMED ABSENT.



AND I WAS VERY MUCH OKAY WITH THAT, TOO.



THE DAY I LEFT THE INSTITUTE WAS A HAPPY DAY.

I FELT LIKE I WAS LEAVING ALL THE BULLSHIT BEHIND ME AND I WAS WALKING TO A BRIGHT FUTURE.

I GUESS THERE IS SOMETHING TO BE SAID ABOUT WALKING TOWARD THE LIGHT.

YOU TEND NOT TO NOTICE THE SHAPE OF YOUR OWN SHADOW.

I KNEW NOTHING OF MY FUTURE. STARRING AT THE LIGHT, I CARED LITTLE ABOUT THE SHADOWS. ALL I KNEW...



...WAS THAT I FINALLY MADE IT.

YOUR NAME AND THE PURPOSE OF YOUR VISIT!

OH, I'M DR. HARLEEN QUINZEL. I START WORKING HERE TODAY.

TAKE OUT SOME FORM OF **GOVERNMENT-ISSUED I.D.** AND POINT IT AT THE CAMERA!



DO YOU HAVE A FORMAL LETTER OF INTRODUCTION?

I, UH, ACTUALLY MY BOSS SHOULD HAVE...

THAT'S ALL RIGHT! SHE'S CLEARED.

I'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE, PRIYA.



HEY, DR.
UH...QUINTZLE? IS
THAT RIGHT?

IT'S *QUINZEL*.
HARLEEN QUINZEL.



ODD NAME.

MIDDLE NAME
FRANCES.

HM...

THAT'S
A MOUTHFUL.

ANYHOW,
I'M TIM. TIM
BRONSON.



I'M THE CHIEF OF
SECURITY HERE.

COME ON,
LET'S GET YOU
INTO OUR
SYSTEM.

RIGHT...

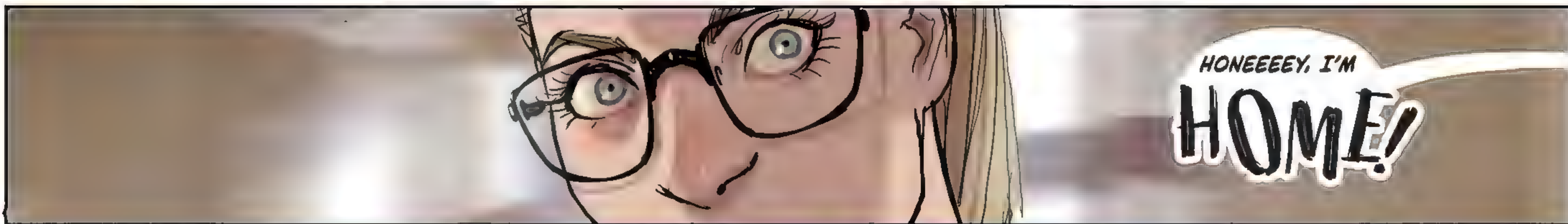


UH, SPEAKING OF *SECURITY*...I WAS
A HALF STEP AWAY FROM A FULL
PELVIC EXAM THERE.

IS THAT THE *STANDARD
OPERATING PROCEDURE*,
OR...?

OH, THAT...
WE'RE ON *HIGH ALERT* AT
LEAST UNTIL HIS *TRANSFER*
IS COMPLETED.

HIS...



HONEEEY, I'M

HOME!



LOOK AT
ALL THESE *GLUM*
FACES!

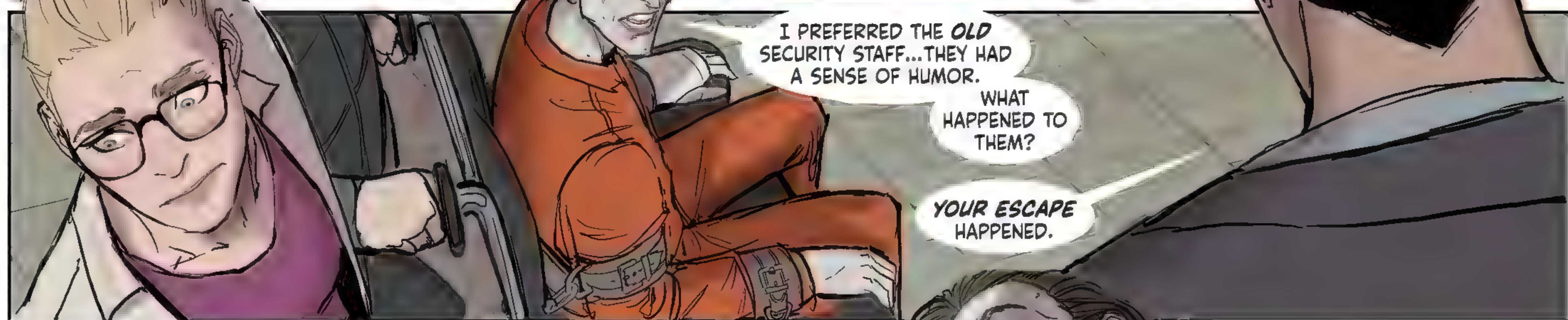
YOU *SEEM*
TROUBLED! HAVE YOU
CONSIDERED THERAPY?
IT'S DONE *WONDERS*
FOR ME!



NOTHING?
OKAY, HOW 'BOUT THIS:
THEY SAY THAT THE DEFINITION
OF MADNESS IS DOING THE **SAME**
THING OVER AND OVER AGAIN
AND EXPECTING DIFFERENT
RESULTS.
SAY...

COME TO THINK
OF IT, YOU SURE DO
KEEP BRINGING ME **BACK**
HERE OVER AND
OVER AGAIN!

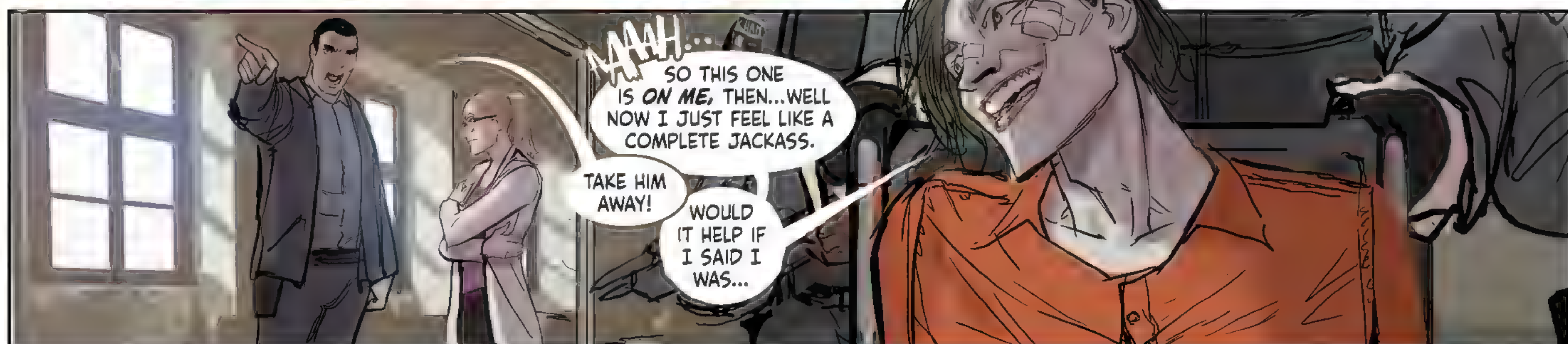
STILL
NOTHING,
HUH?



I PREFERRED THE **OLD**
SECURITY STAFF...THEY HAD
A SENSE OF HUMOR.

WHAT
HAPPENED TO
THEM?

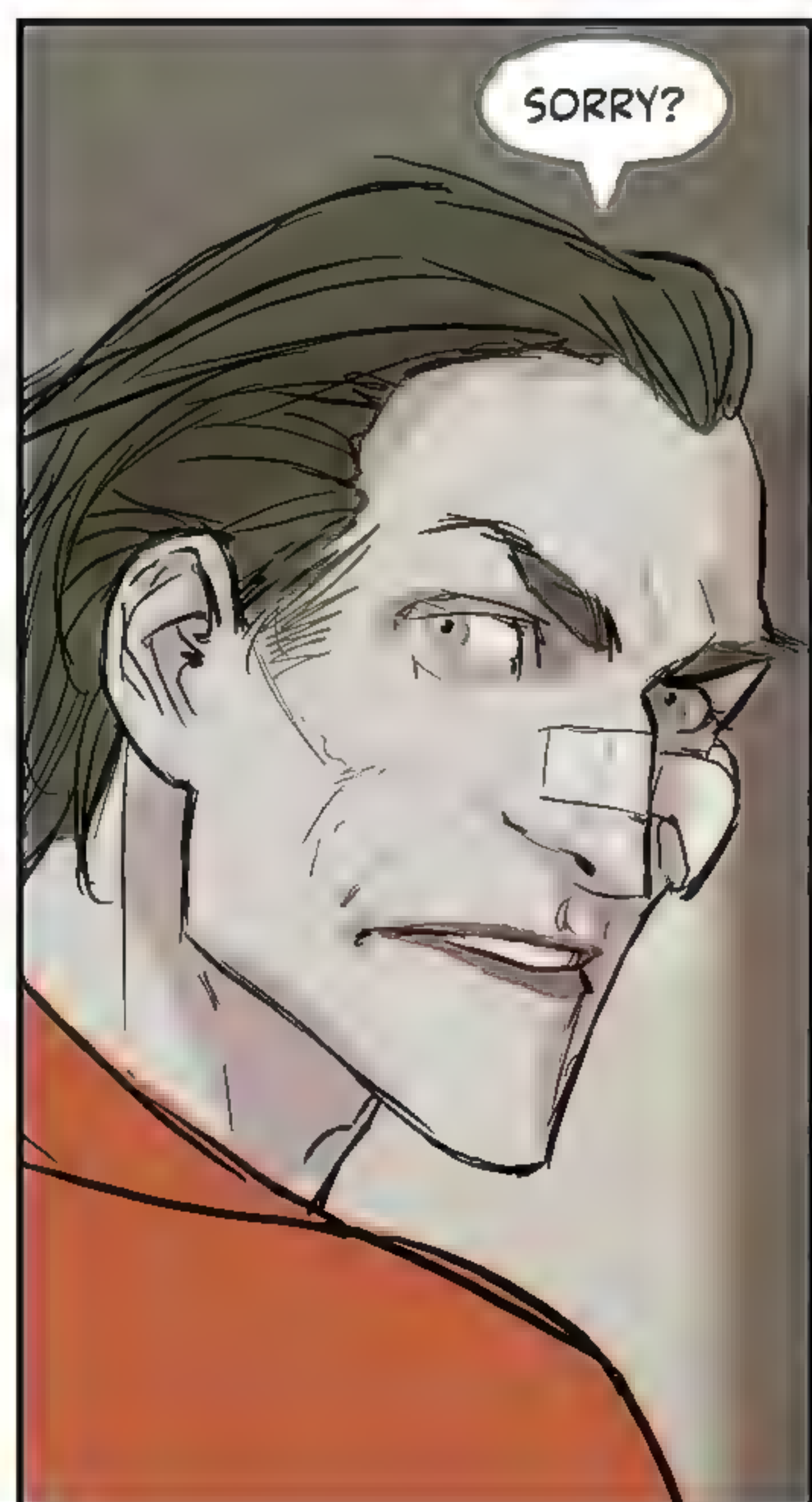
YOUR ESCAPE
HAPPENED.



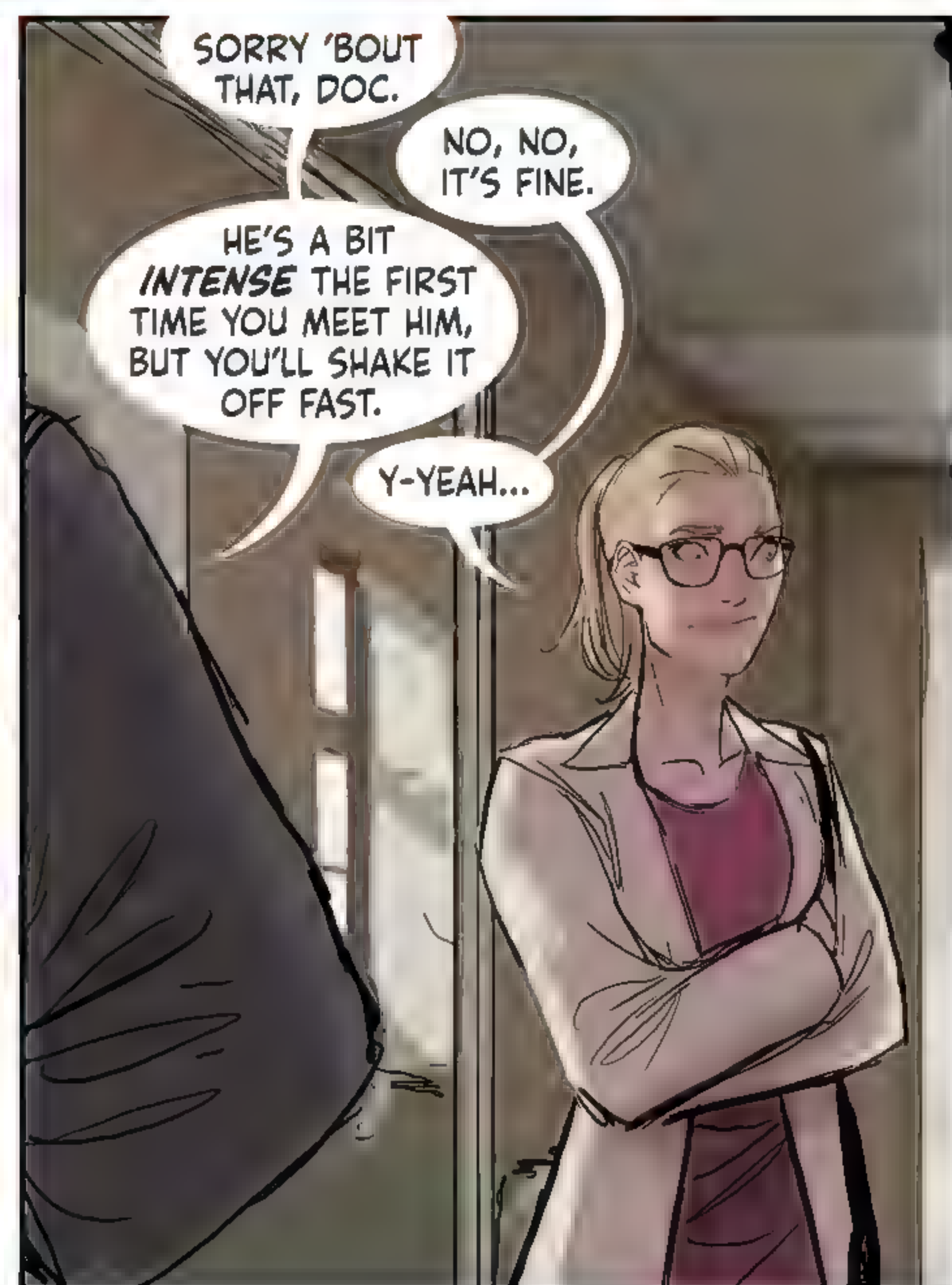
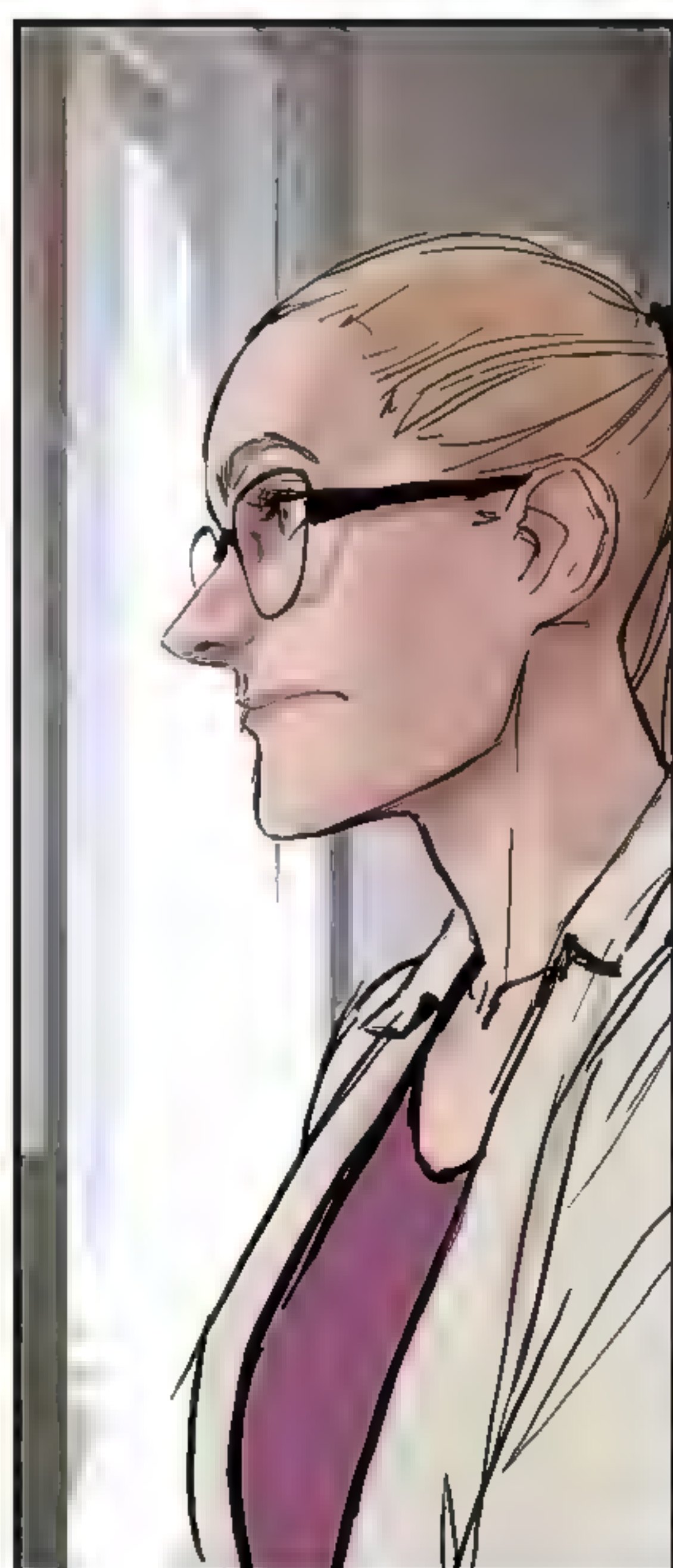
HAHAH...
SO THIS ONE
IS **ON ME**, THEN...WELL
NOW I JUST FEEL LIKE A
COMPLETE JACKASS.

TAKE HIM
AWAY!

WOULD
IT HELP IF
I SAID I WAS...



SORRY?



SORRY 'BOUT
THAT, DOC.

NO, NO,
IT'S FINE.

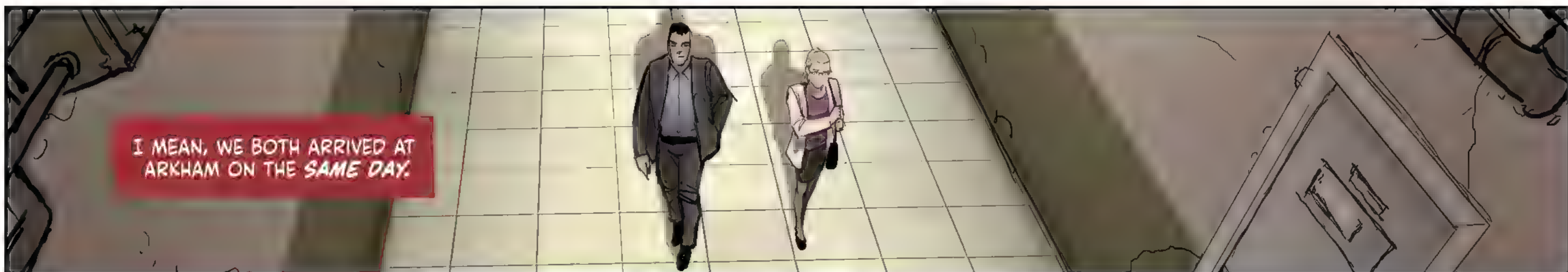
HE'S A BIT
INTENSE THE FIRST
TIME YOU MEET HIM,
BUT YOU'LL SHAKE IT
OFF FAST.

Y-YEAH...



BACK THEN IT ALL FELT LIKE NOTHING MORE THAN A **TERRIFYING COINCIDENCE**.

BUT KNOWING NOW WHAT I NEVER KNEW THEN...I CAN'T HELP BUT ONCE AGAIN THINK OF SHONDRA'S STARS.



I MEAN, WE BOTH ARRIVED AT ARKHAM ON THE **SAME DAY**.



WE WENT THROUGH THE **SAME THINGS** FOR DIFFERENT REASONS...

OKAY NOW...LOOK THIS WAY.

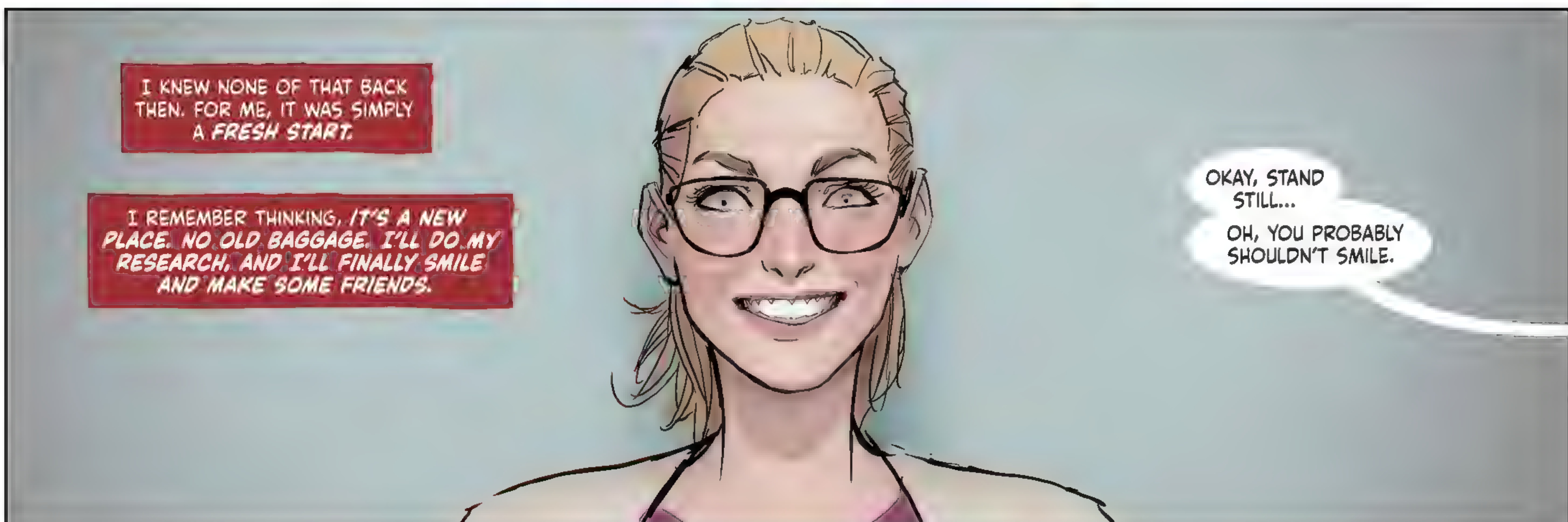


THINKING ABOUT IT, IT ALL FEELS SORT OF **COSMIC**...THE TWO OF US, LIKE TWO INTERSTELLAR OBJECTS GRAVITATING TOWARD EACH OTHER ON A COLLISION COURSE...

OH, THERE WOULD BE **CHAOS** AND **DESTRUCTION**...

BUT, MY, WHAT A **SIGHT**. IT WOULD MAKE.

AND SMILE, JACKASS!

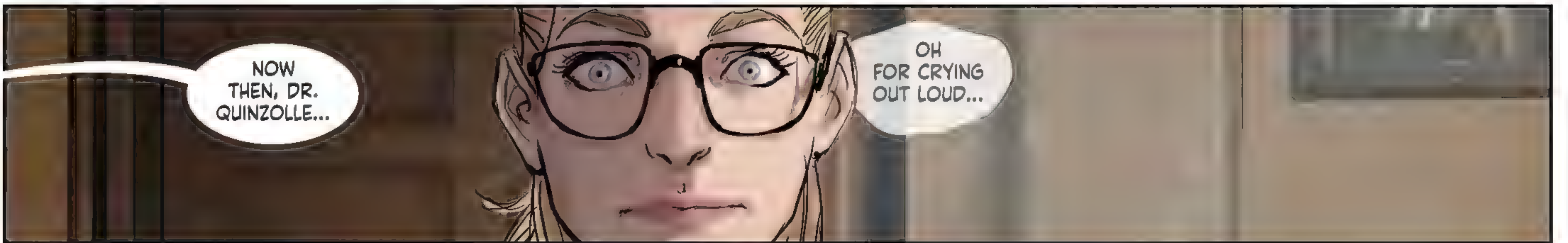
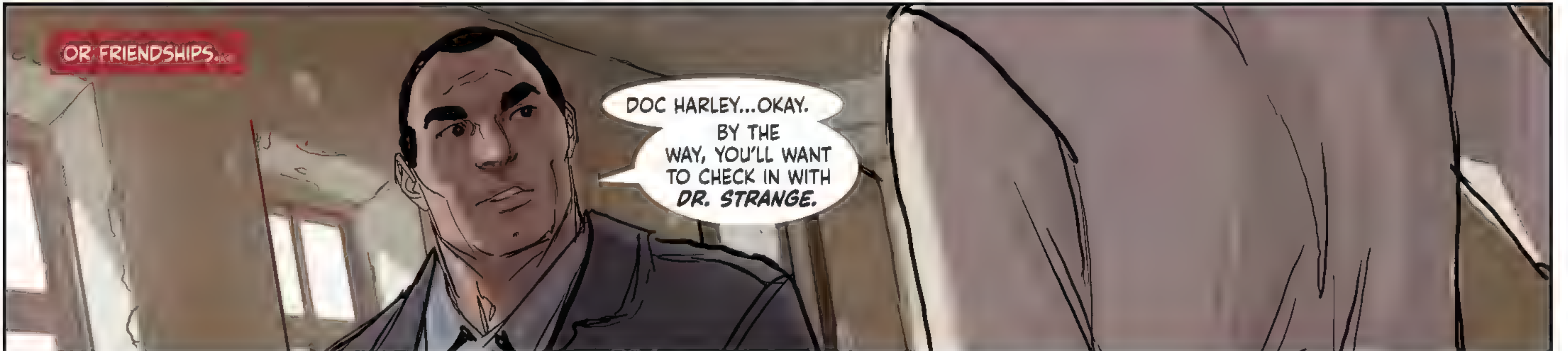
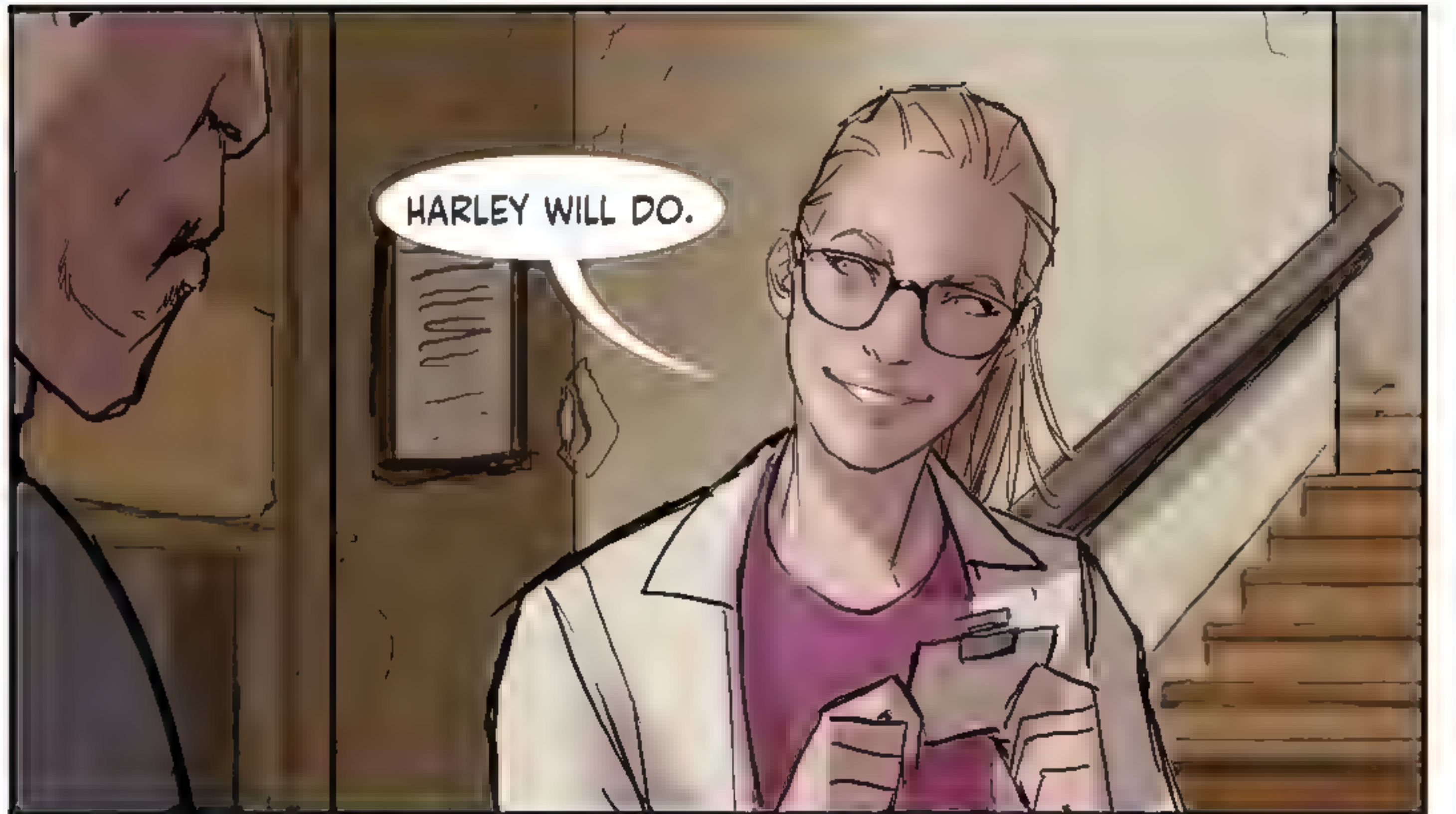


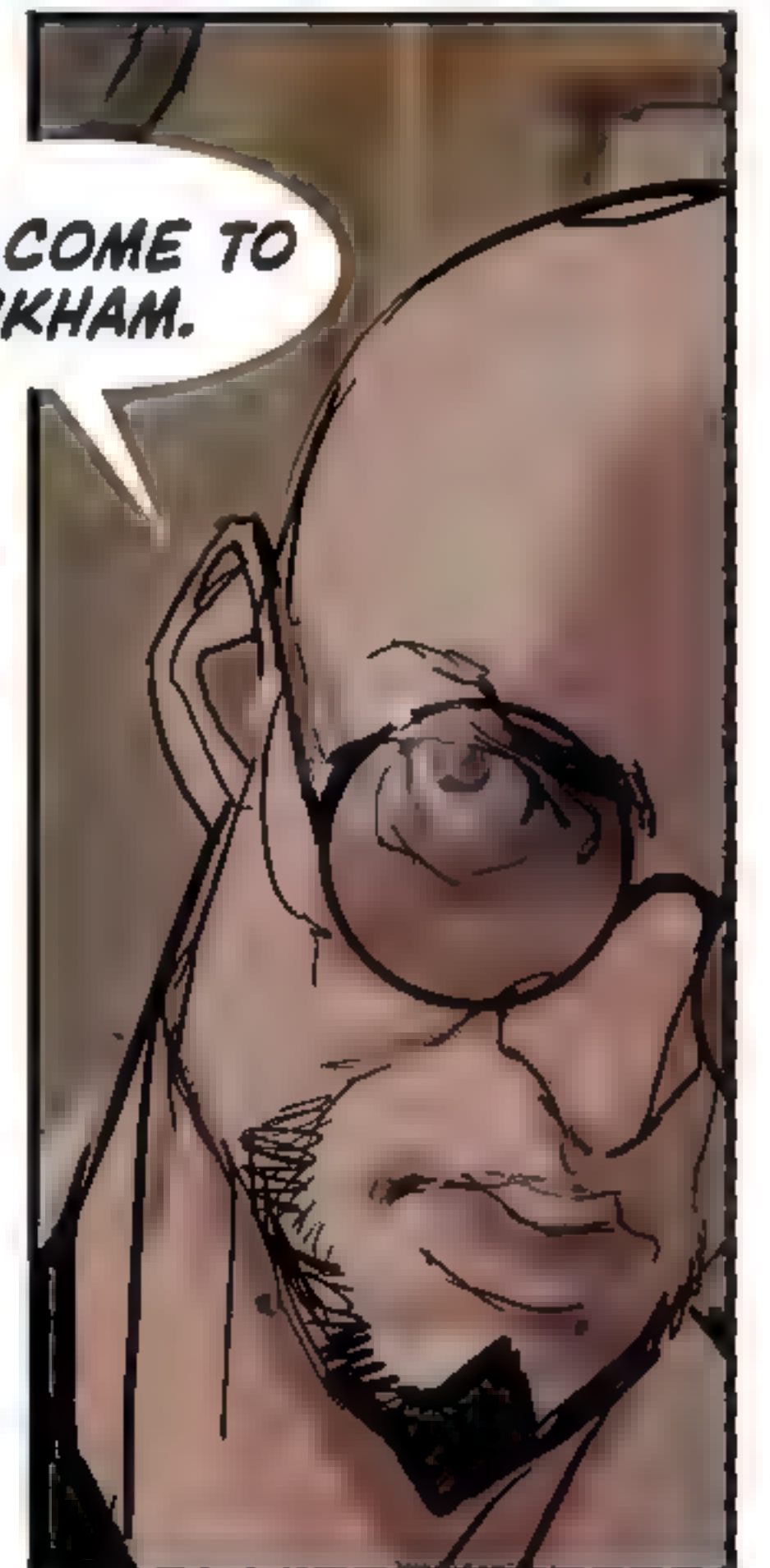
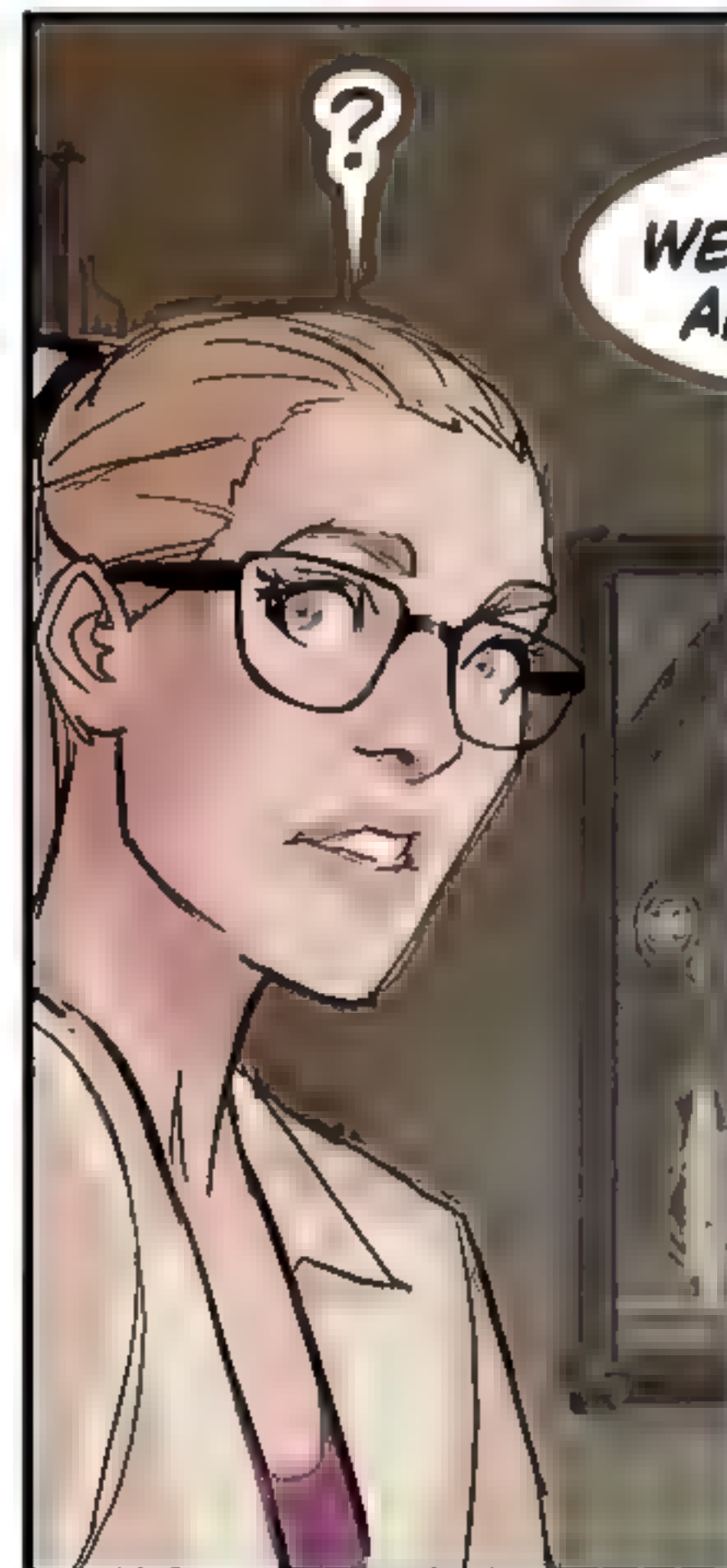
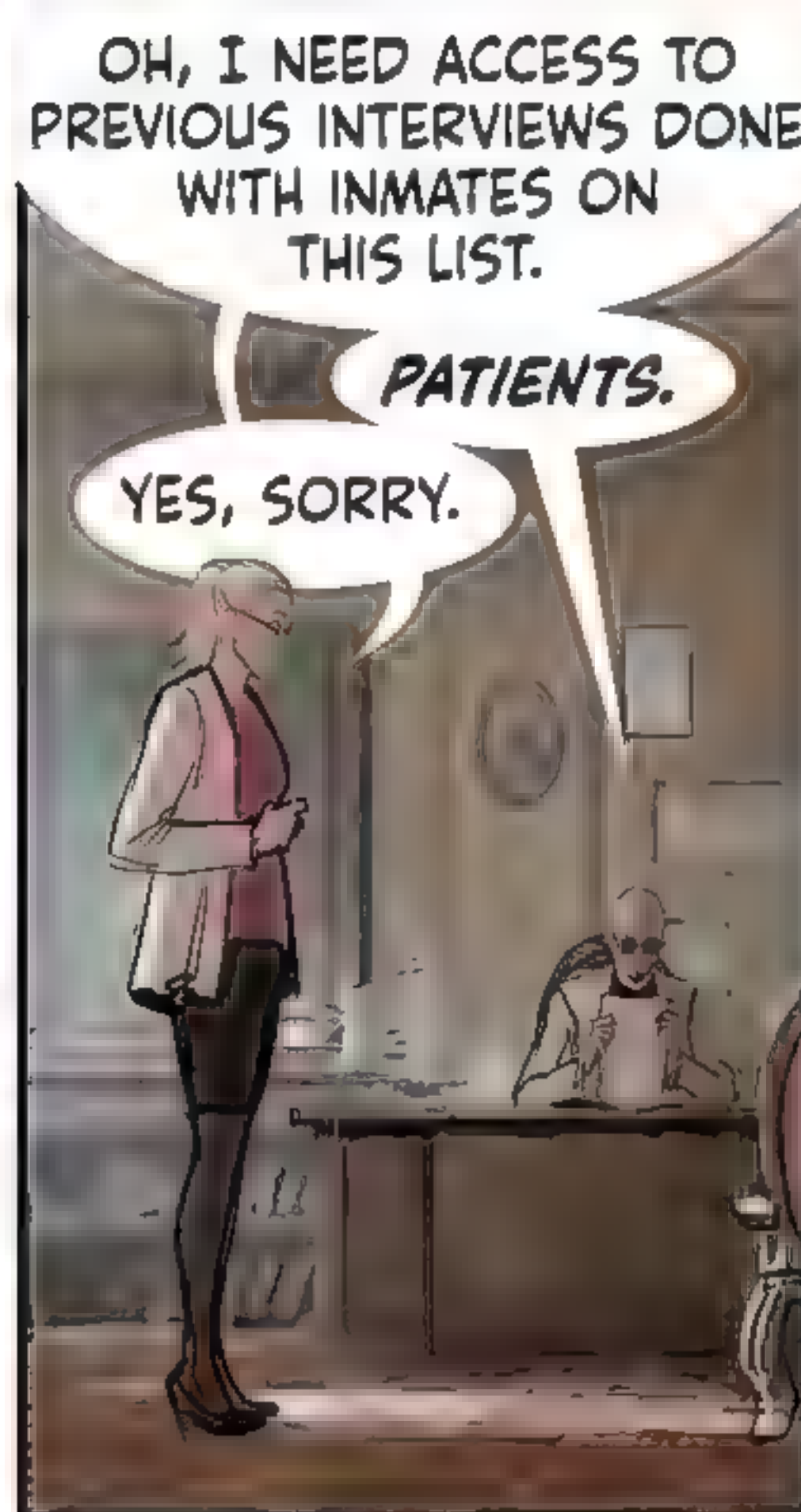
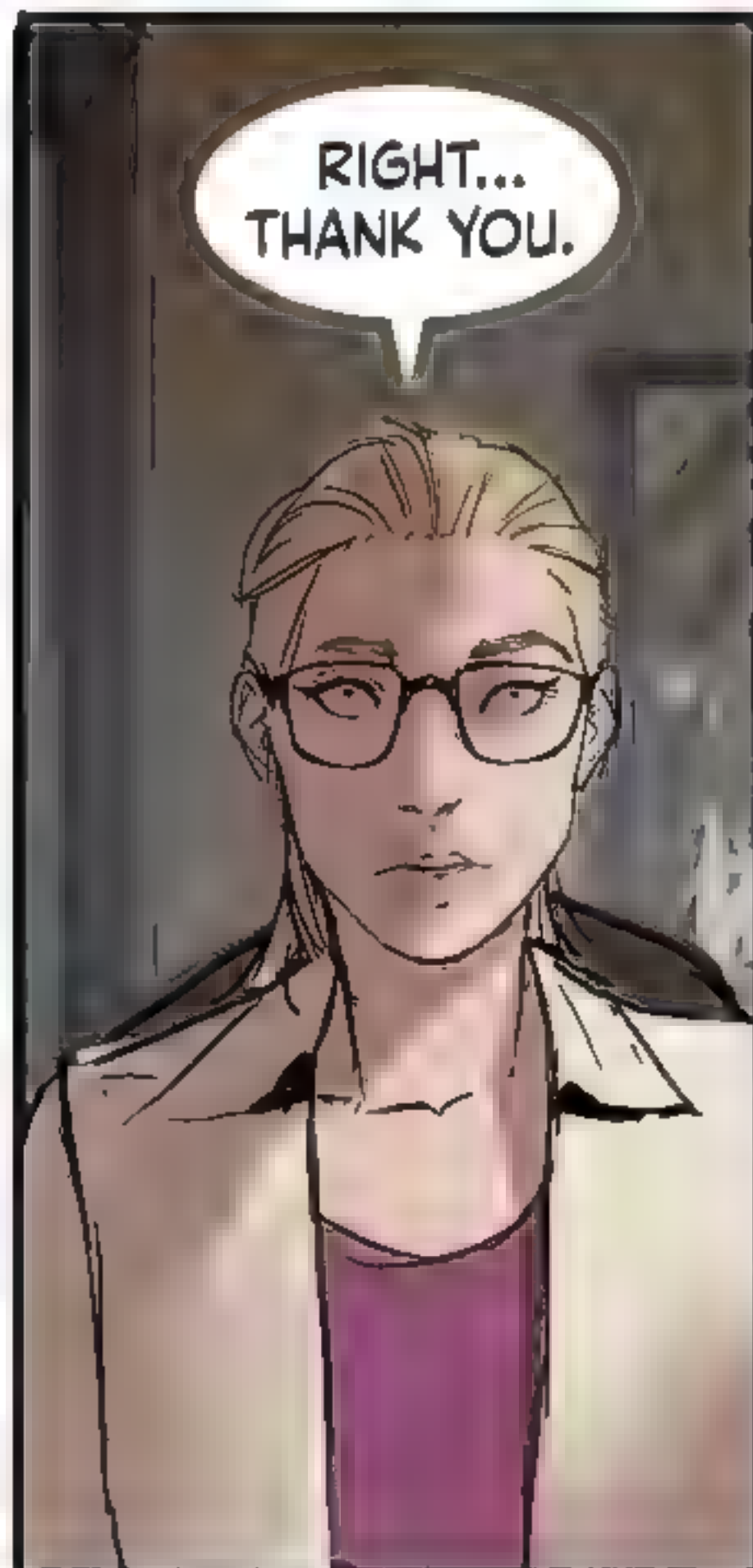
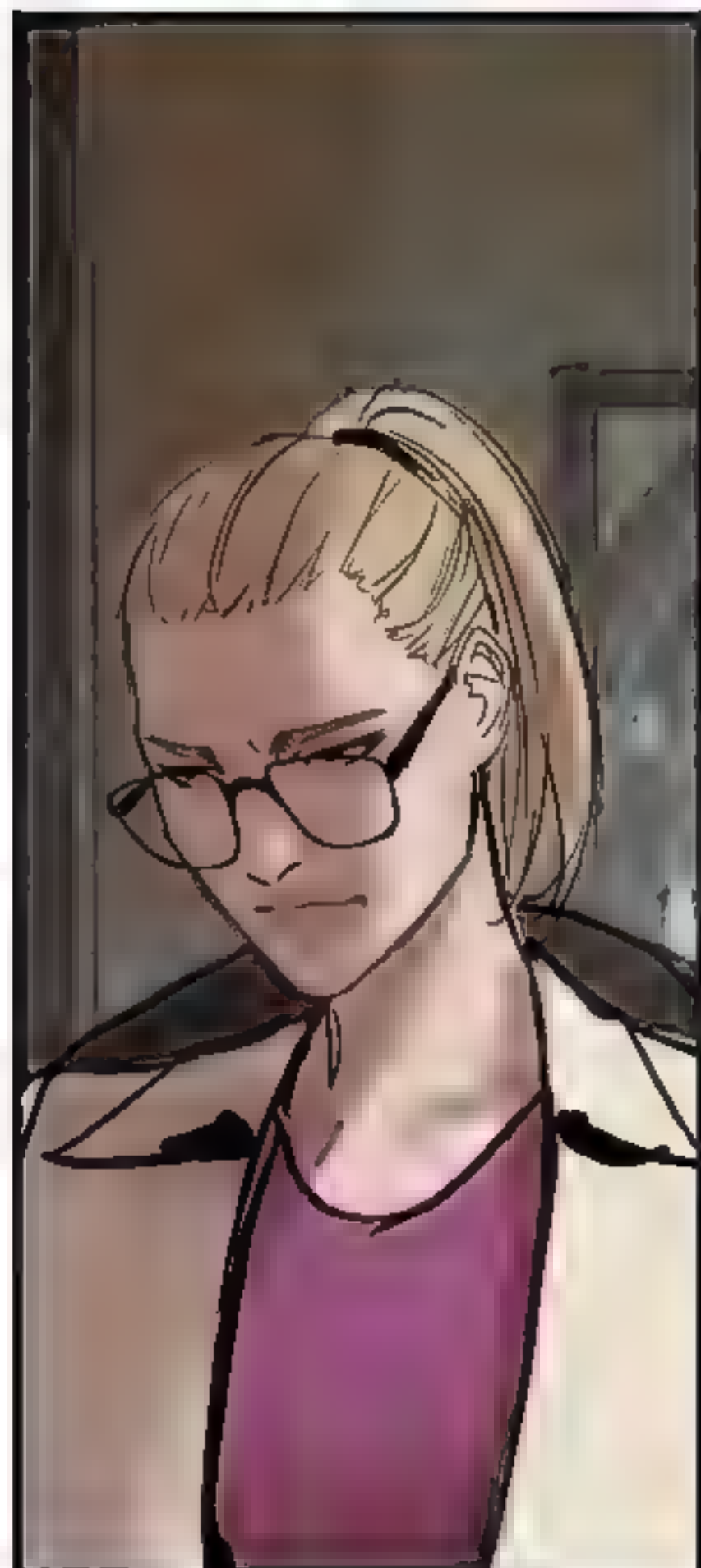
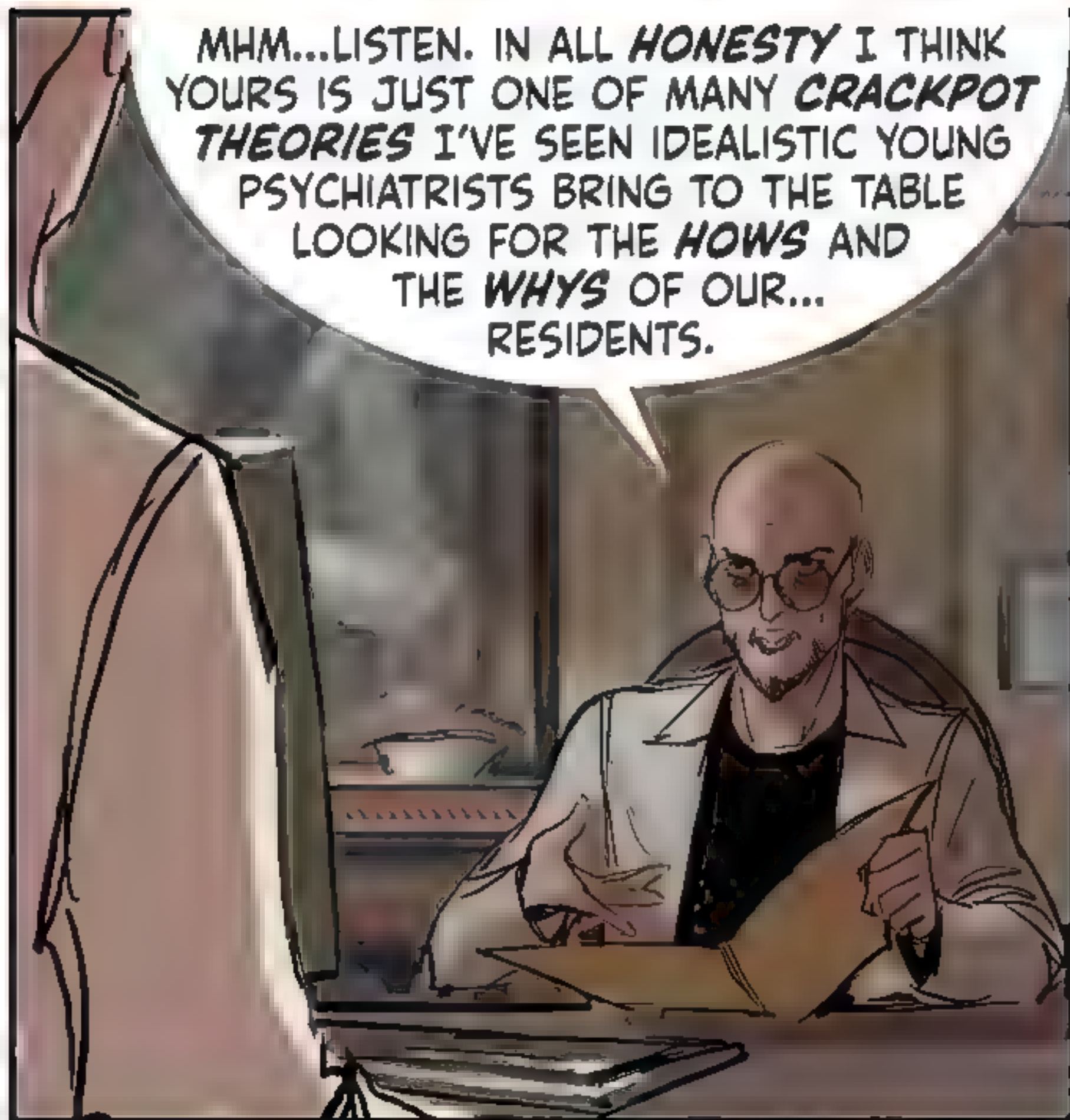
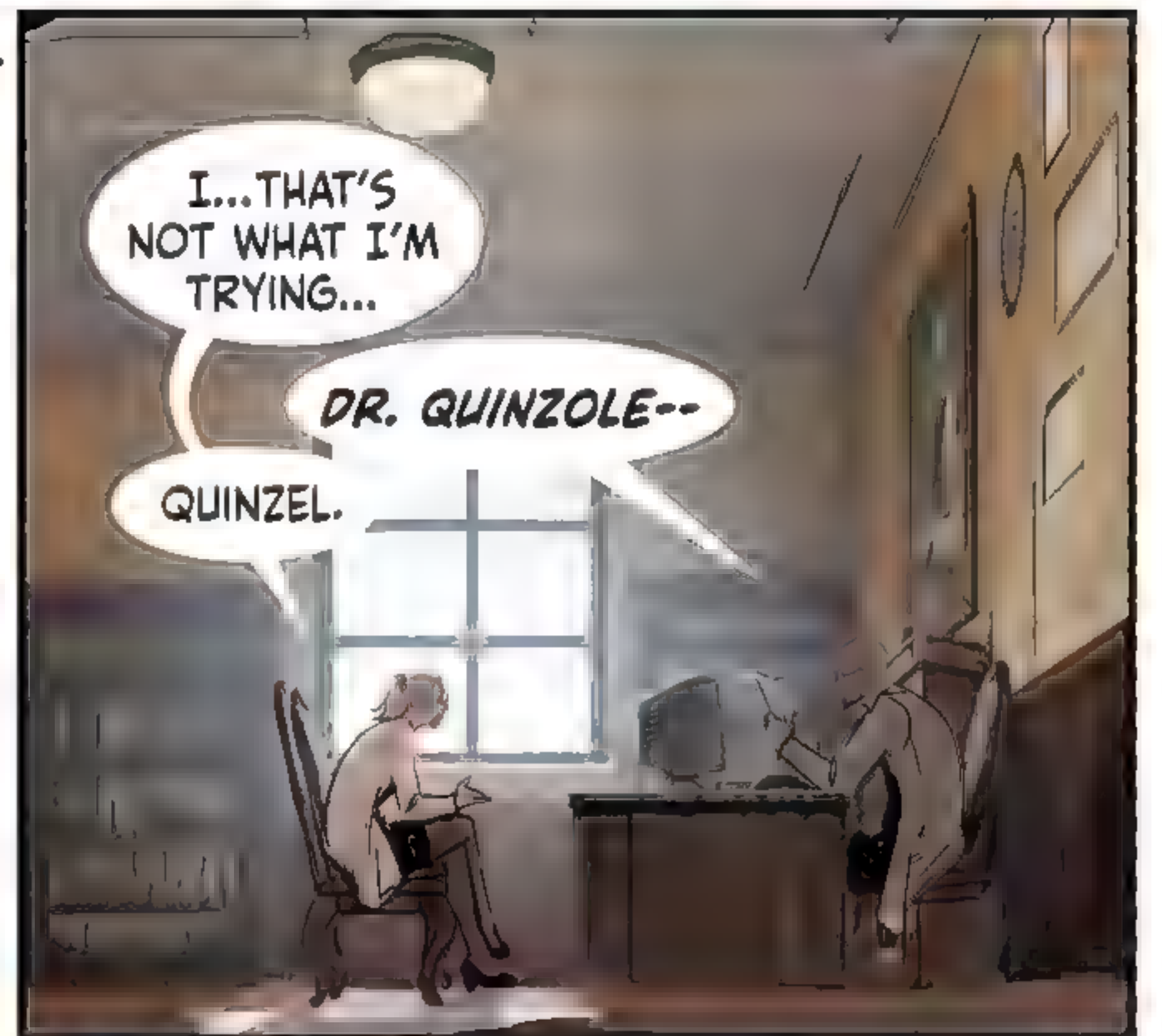
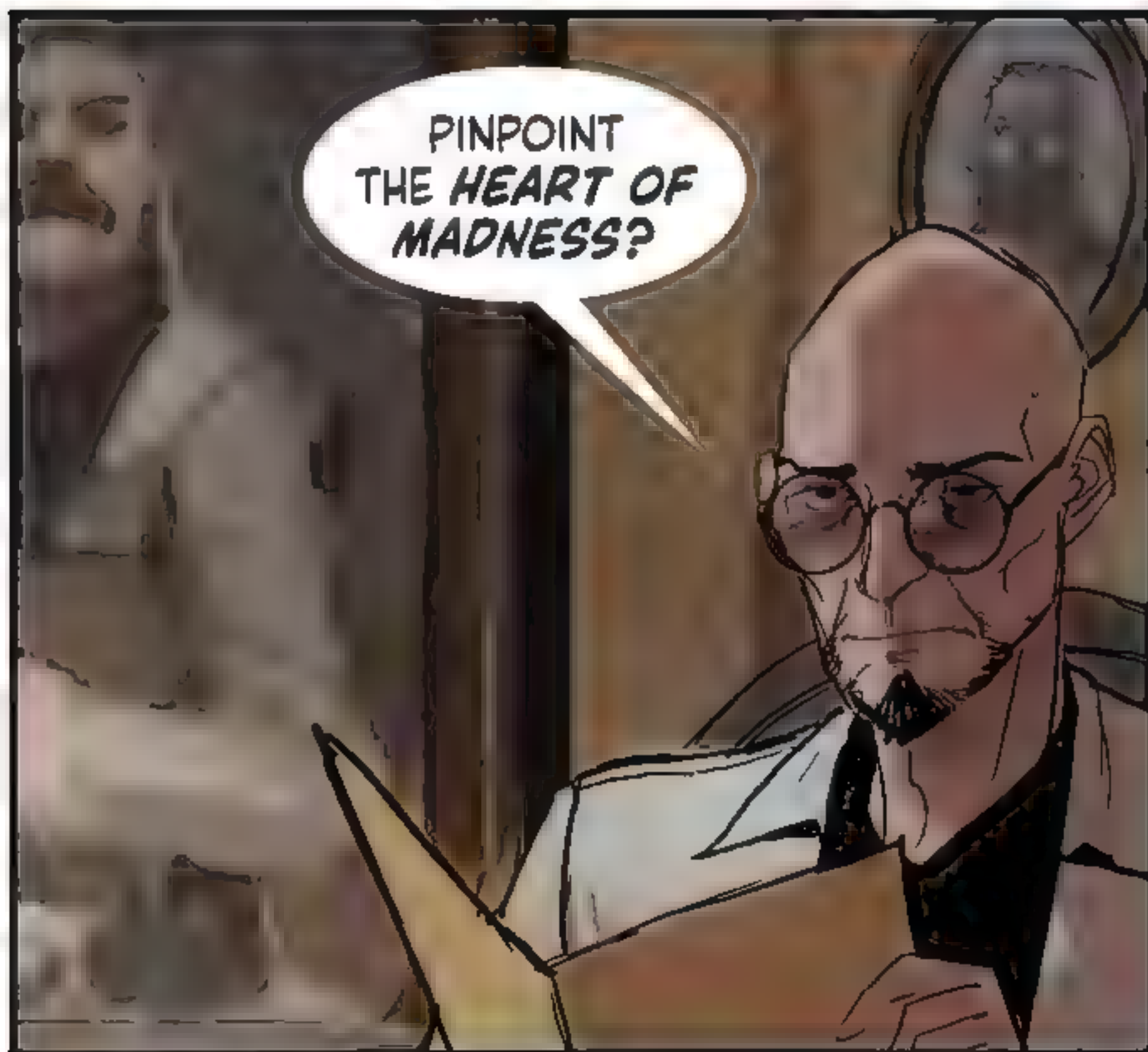
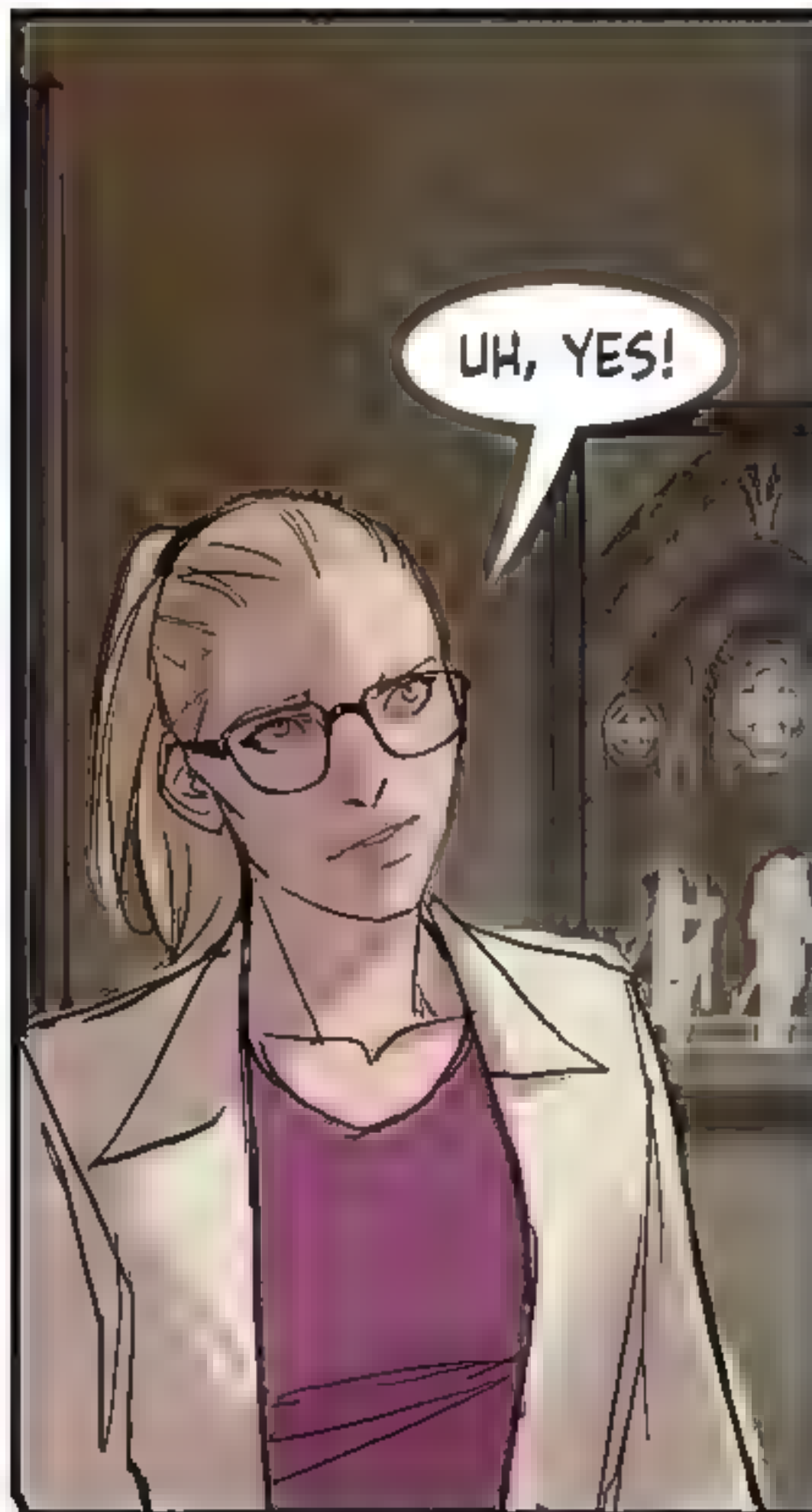
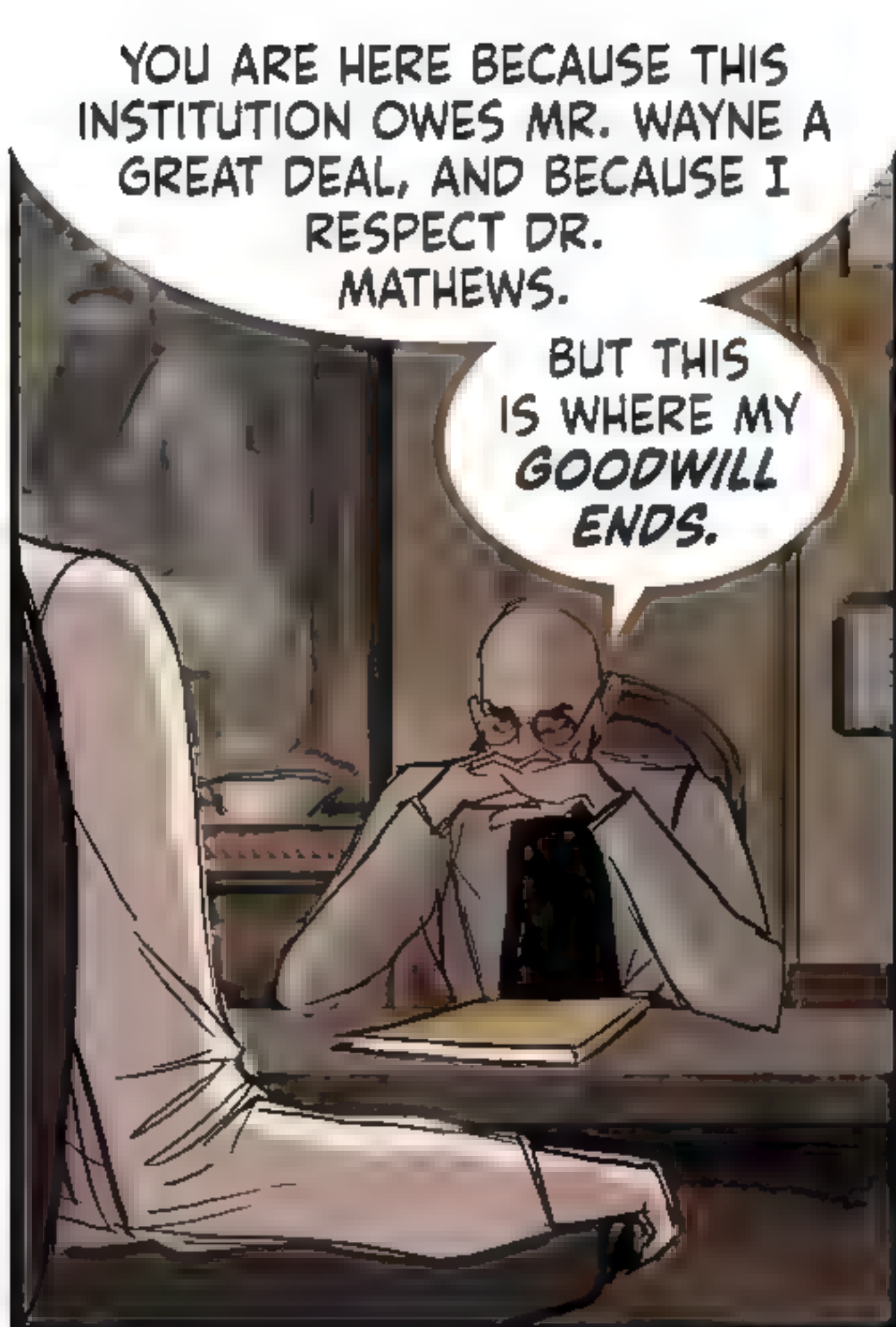
I KNEW NONE OF THAT BACK THEN. FOR ME, IT WAS SIMPLY A **FRESH START**.

I REMEMBER THINKING, **IT'S A NEW PLACE. NO OLD BAGGAGE. I'LL DO MY RESEARCH, AND I'LL FINALLY SMILE AND MAKE SOME FRIENDS.**

OKAY, STAND STILL...
OH, YOU PROBABLY SHOULDN'T SMILE.

25
TURNS OUT, ARKHAM WAS NO PLACE FOR SMILES.



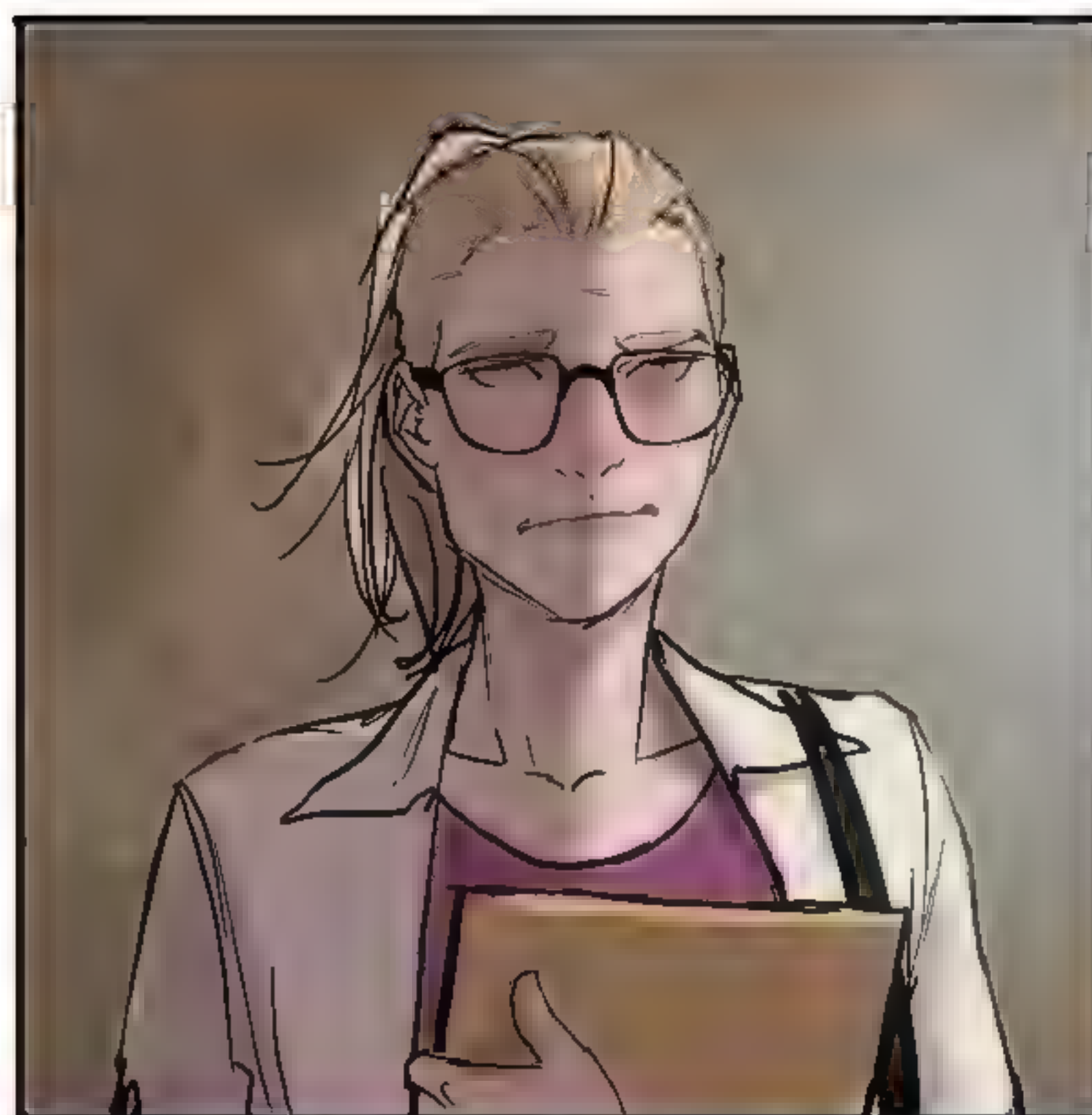


HE SAID WELCOME,
BUT LET'S BE HONEST,
THIS WAS ARKHAM.

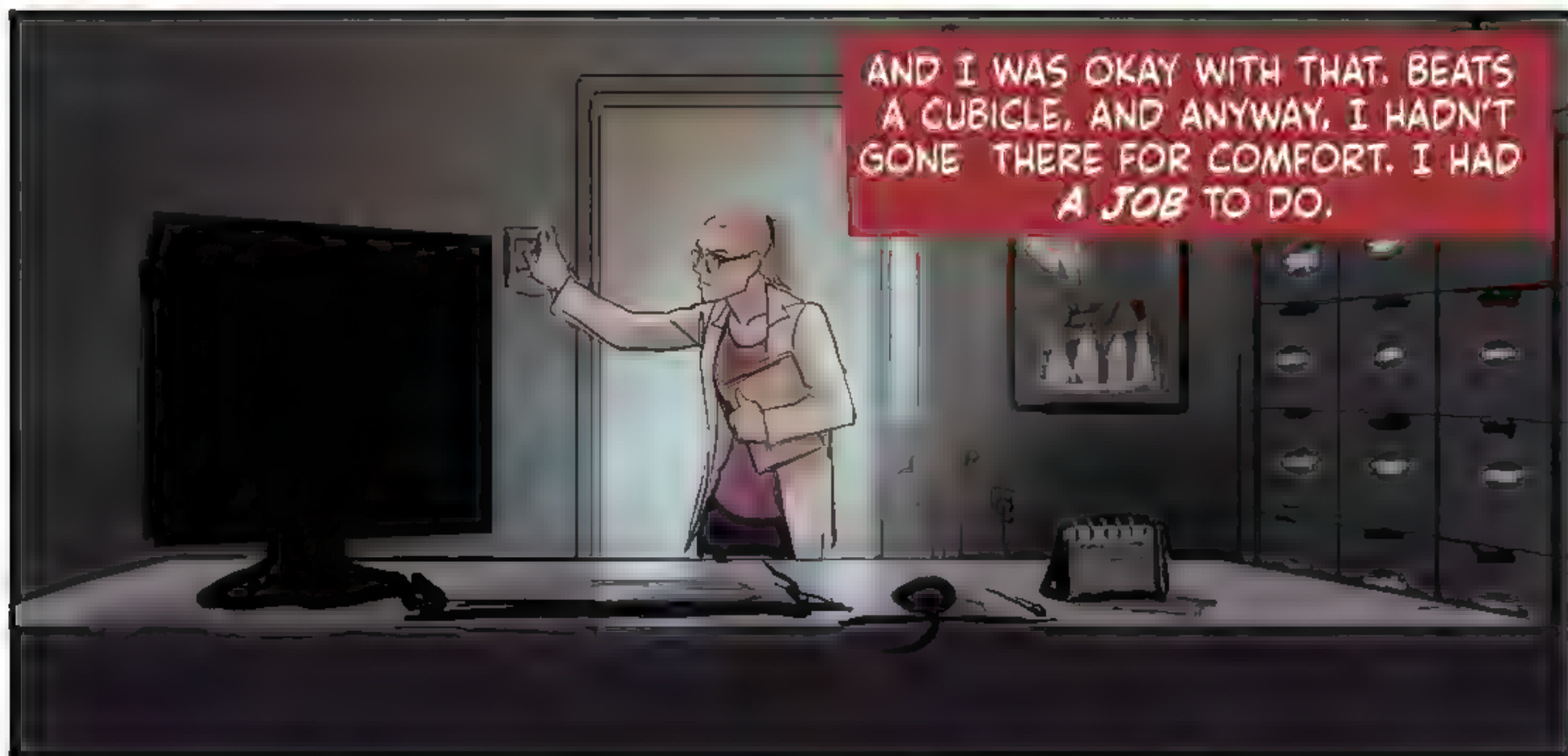


A SMALL, WINDOWLESS OFFICE
WITH A MISPELLED NAME WAS
AS GOOD AS IT GOT.

Dr. Quinzoll



AND I WAS OKAY WITH THAT. BEATS
A CUBICLE, AND ANYWAY, I HADN'T
GONE THERE FOR COMFORT. I HAD
A *JOB* TO DO.



I CAME TO ARKHAM WITH
A LIST IN HAND. A VERY
SPECIFIC LIST.



IT COMPRISED PEOPLE WHO
WOULD BE MY PERFECT
EXAMPLES OF THE *ABSOLUTE*
DETERIORATION OF EMPATHY.

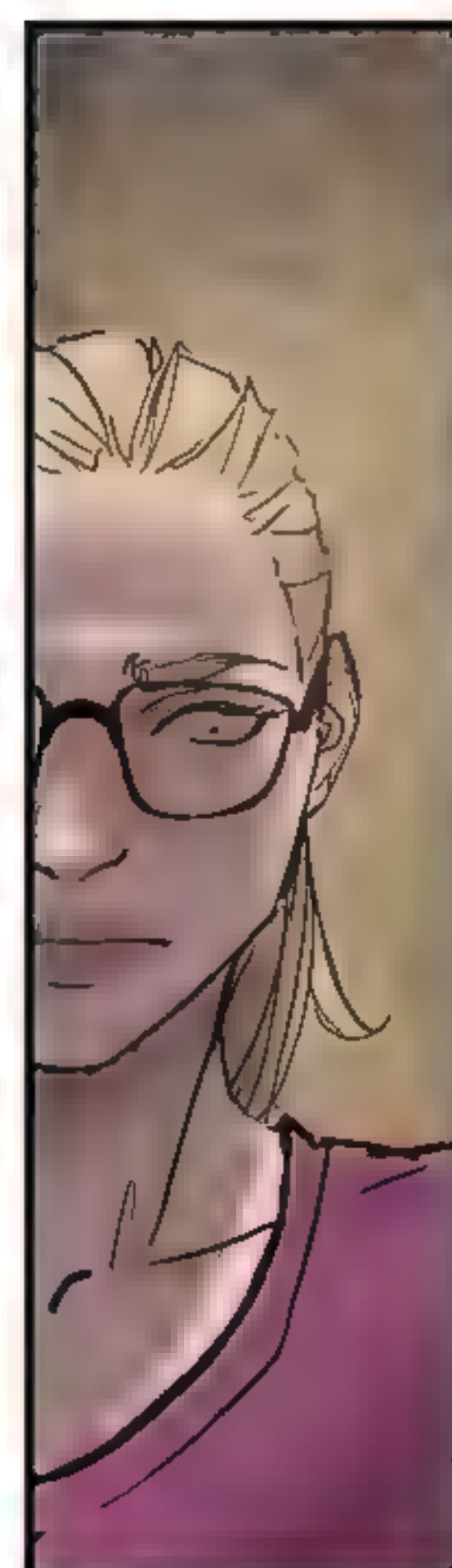
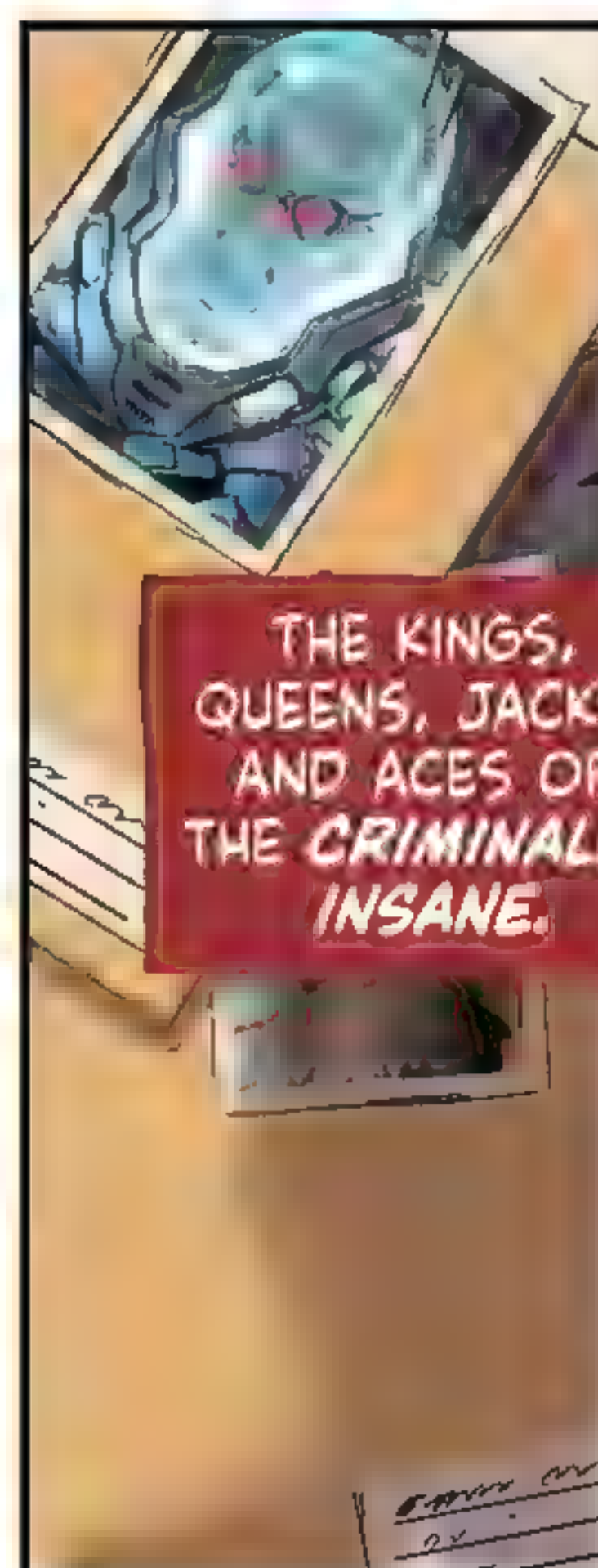
I HAD A SIMILAR LIST FOR BLACKGATE
PRISON, BUT AS I WASN'T ALLOWED
THERE AT THE MOMENT...WELL, YOU
KNOW HOW IT GOES. YOU PLAY THE
CARDS YOU HAVE, NOT THE CARDS
YOU WANT.

AND MY, WHAT A DECK IT WAS. EVERY
PSYCHOLOGIST'S *DREAM*. THE STUFF
THAT CAREERS ARE BUILT ON.



THE KINGS,
QUEENS, JACKS,
AND ACES OF
THE *CRIMINALLY*
INSANE.

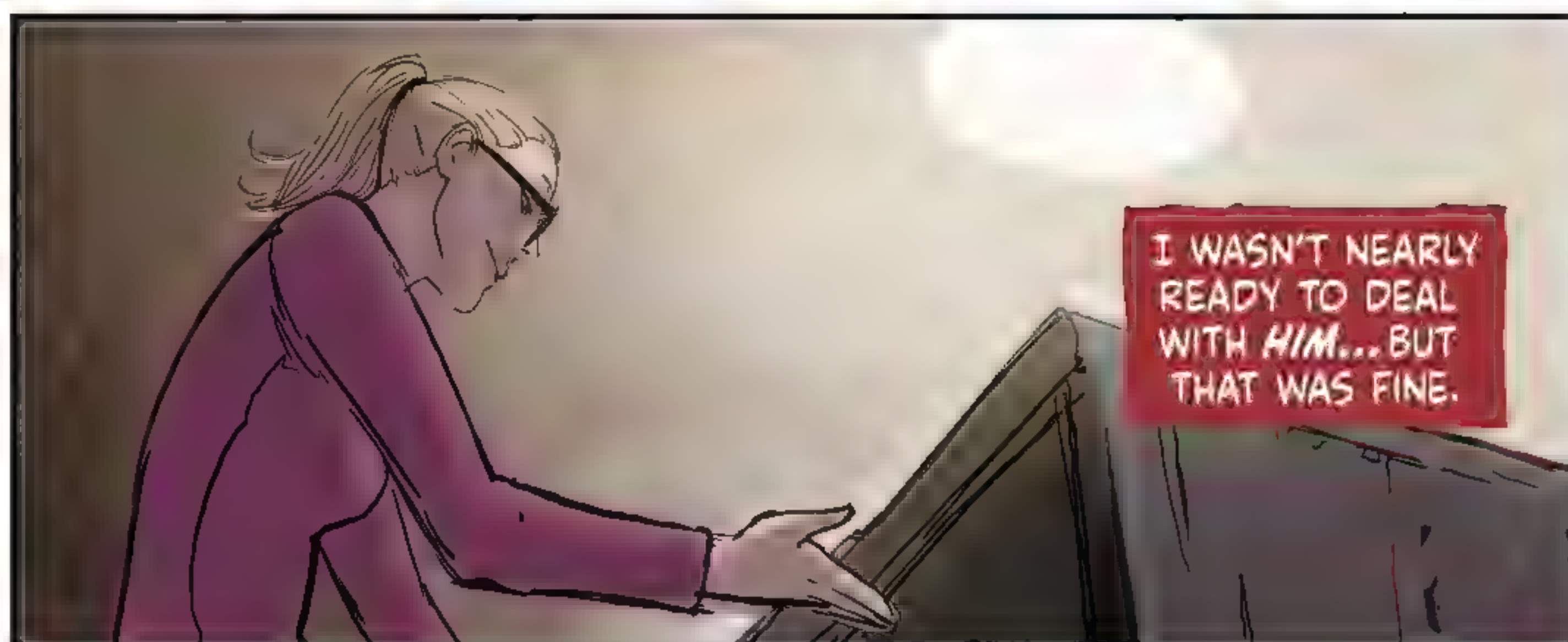
AND YES...
A JOKER
AS WELL...



BACK OF THE LINE
FOR YOU.



I WASN'T NEARLY
READY TO DEAL
WITH *HIM*...BUT
THAT WAS FINE.



I HAD MORE THAN ENOUGH
ANTISOCIAL PERSONALITY
DISORDERS TO GO THROUGH.

THE WAY I SAW IT, BY THE TIME
I WAS DONE WITH THEM, MY
NIGHTMARES WOULD HAVE GONE
AWAY, AND HE WOULD SHRINK
IN THE EYES OF THIS...WELL...
YOU GET IT.



AND YOU KNOW WHAT? AT FIRST, IT SEEMED THIS MIGHT BE THE CASE.

I MEAN, HE WAS AN INTENSE PERSONALITY BUT LET'S BE HONEST, THEY ALL WERE.

OH EVERY SCAR IS A STORY...

A LOT OF STORIES, A LOT OF REAL HAPPY ENDINGS.

YES, I'M AWARE OF THEIR...STORIES MR. ZSASZ.

I'M CURRENTLY INTERESTED IN YOUR STORY.

BUT THEY ARE ALL MY STORY!

RIGHT...

EMPATHY?!

YOU WANT TO ASK ME ABOUT MY EMPATHY?!

I CAN LITERALLY FEEL THE DYING OF NATURE IN MY VERY FLESH.

I CAN HEAR THE SCREAMS OF THE GREEN AND THE TRIUMPHANT HOWLS OF THE FESTERING DECAY.

AND YOU HAVE THE NERVE TO ASK ME ABOUT EMPATHY, AS YOU SCRIBBLE NOTES ON THE DESECRATED CORPSES OF FELLED TREES!?

THE ONLY REASON I AM EVEN HERE IS BECAUSE I LET THEM CATCH ME!

MY RIDDLES ARE THEIR FIGHTING CHANCE.

BUT DON'T WORRY, DOCTOR, I'M HERE TEMPORARILY...

IN FACT, I'LL GIVE YOU A CLUE OF WHAT I'LL DO!

THERE'S A THING ON SUPERMAN'S BACK, A WONDERFUL THING, WITH A LETTER ON TOP.

NAME ME THAT LETTER AND NAME ME THAT THING...

S...CAPE?

NO ROOM FOR EMPATHY.

MAN-EAT-MAN WORLD.

ME...TOP OF THE FOOD CHAIN.

AND SEE ME GO FREE WITH NO CHAIN, CUFF, OR STRING!

WELL, DOCTOR? WHAT WILL I DO?

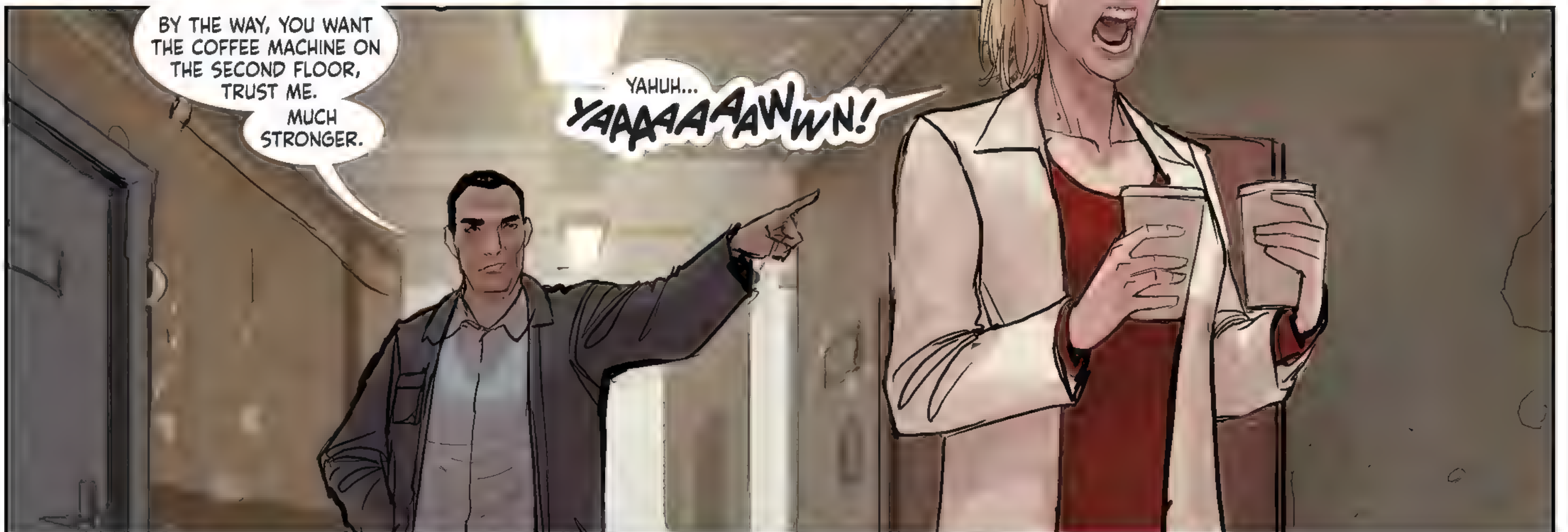
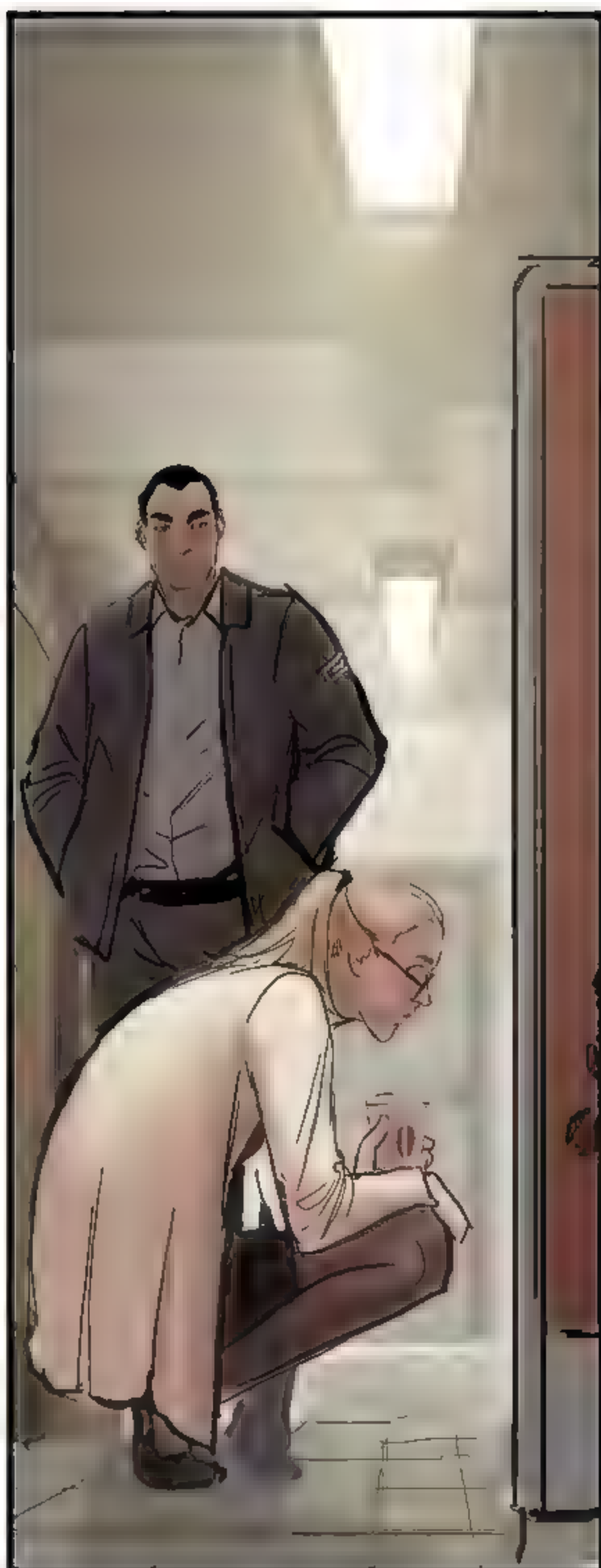
ALICE! AT LONG LAST YOU'VE ARRIVED!

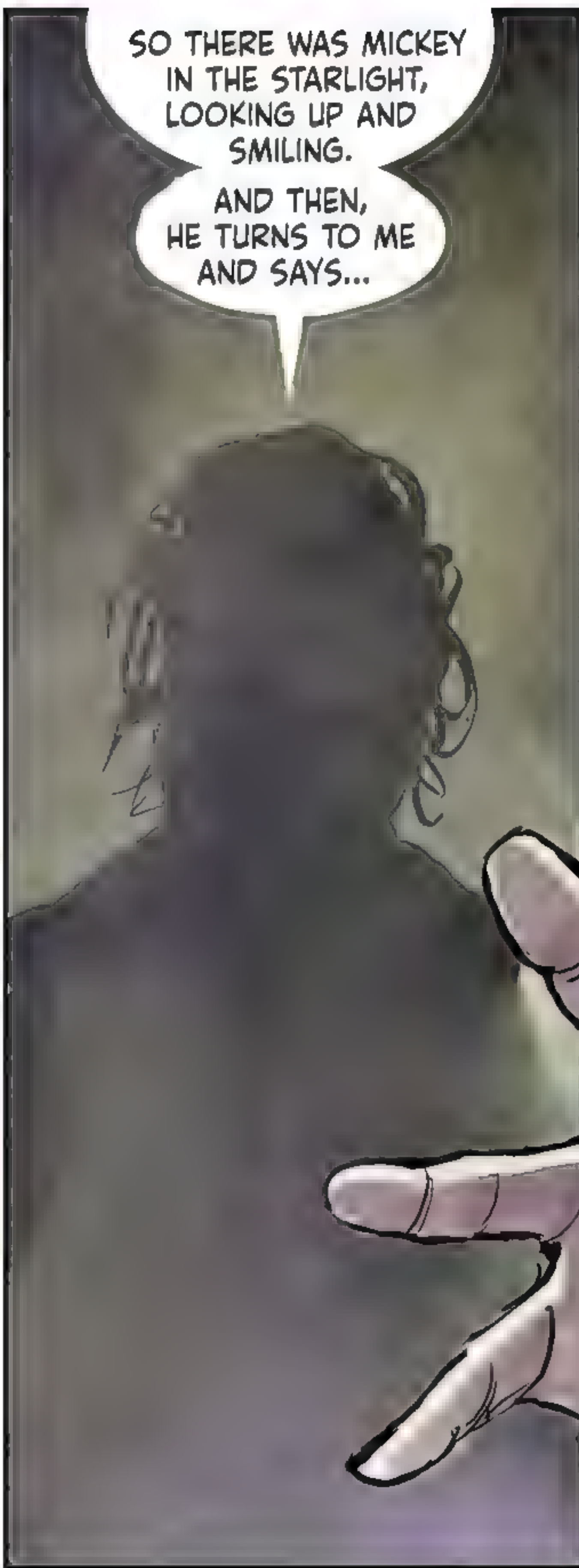
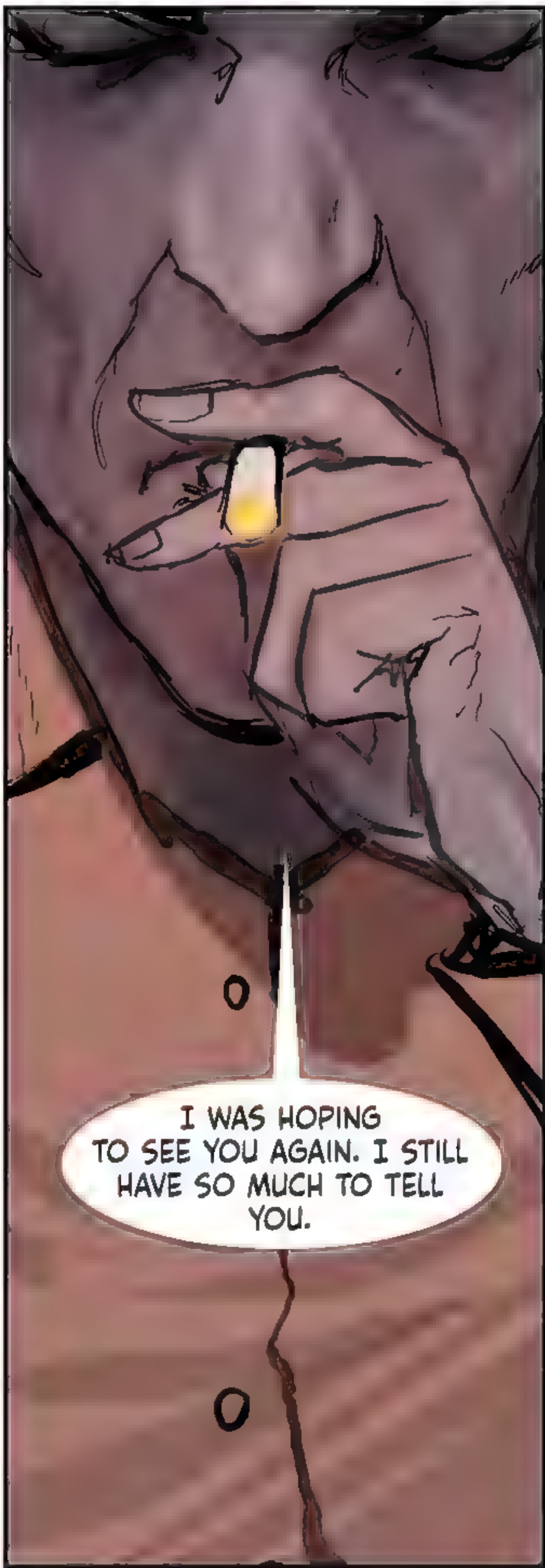
WE ABSOLUTELY MUST HAVE OUR TEA NOW!

FOR A WHILE MY SLEEP IMPROVED, BUT AS MY INTERVIEW LIST GREW SHORTER, MY THOUGHTS TURNED TO THE FILE IN MY DRAWER. TO HIM.

HE STARTED WEIGHING HEAVY ON MY MIND, AND WITH THAT, THE MISTS FOUND THEIR WAY BACK INTO MY DREAMS, NOW MORE TERRIFYING THAN EVER.

THERE WAS ONLY ONE THING I COULD DO ABOUT IT.





BLAAH?

FOR MORE THAN
THREE WEEKS I'D BEEN
AVOIDING HIM.

FOR ALMOST A MONTH
HE HAD *INVAD*ED MY
DREAMS.

AND THAT DAY I KNEW THERE
WAS NO ESCAPE FROM IT.

FUCK!

FINE,
DAMN IT!

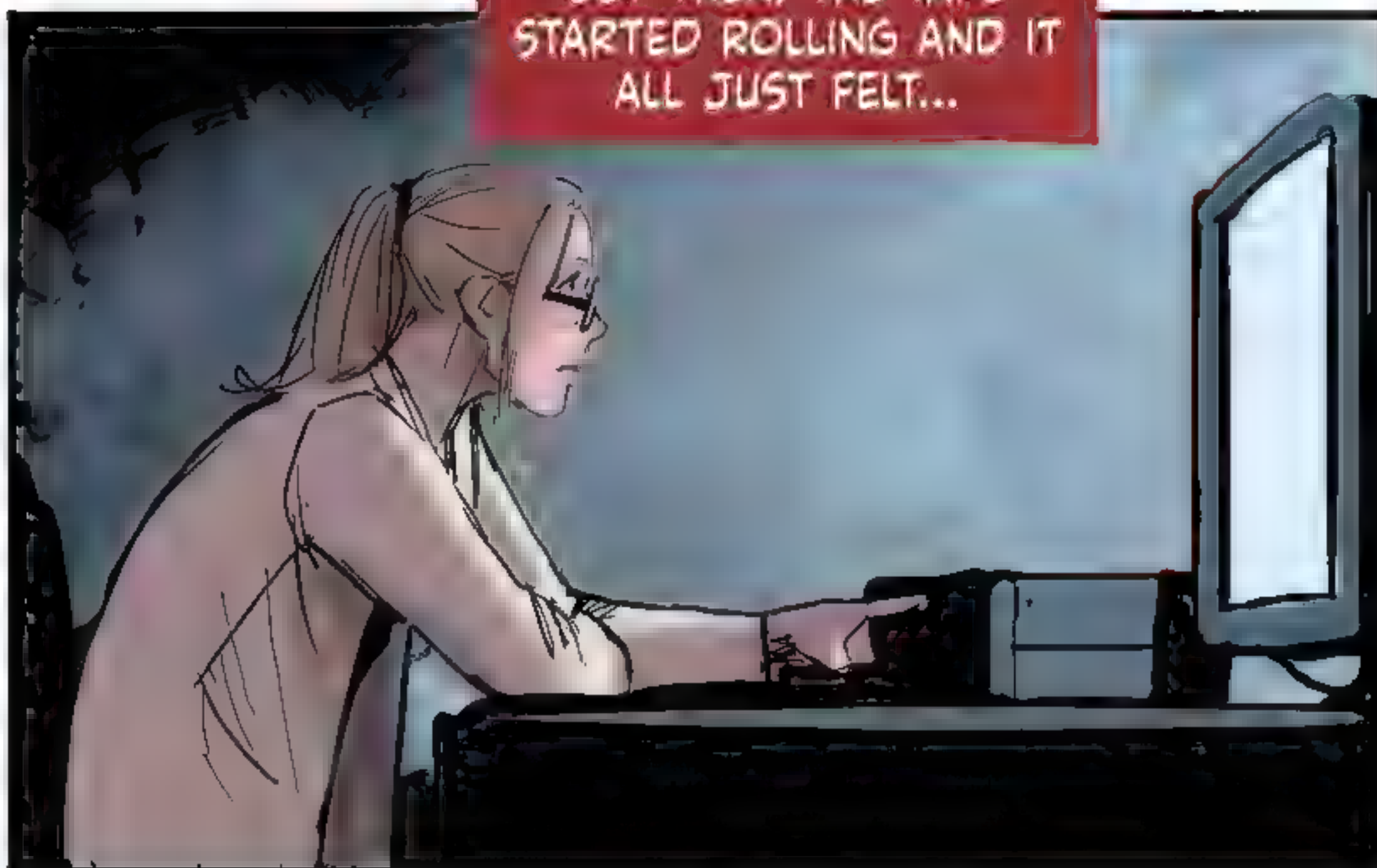
OKAY, HARLEY! YOU'RE A GROWN
WOMAN WHO SAT FACE TO FACE
WITH *KILLER CROC*.

THIS
CLOWN IS
NOTHING!

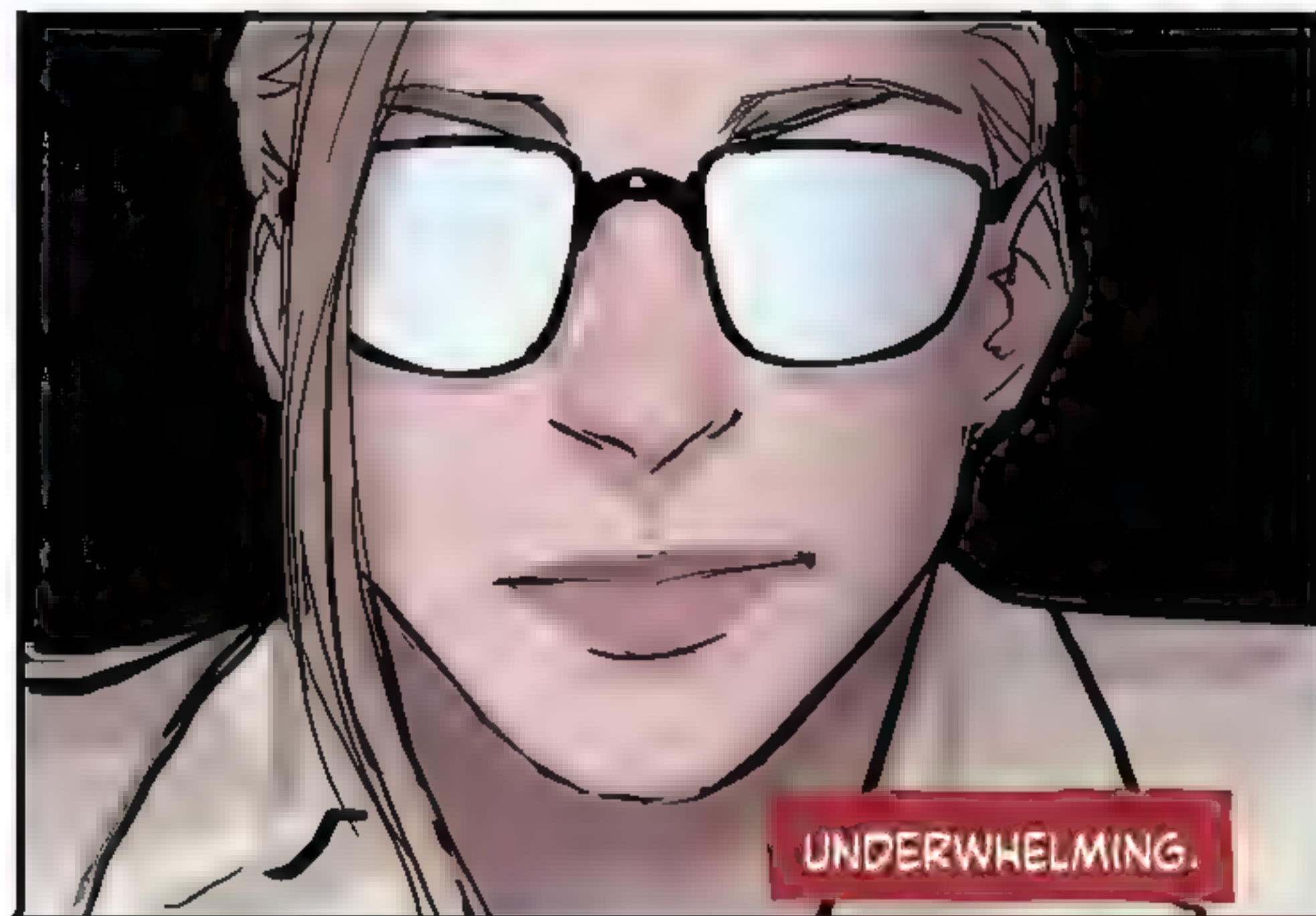
I SAID THAT, BUT I
REMEMBER MY HANDS
SHAKING AS I CARRIED
BOXES WITH TAPES OF
HIS INTERVIEWS.



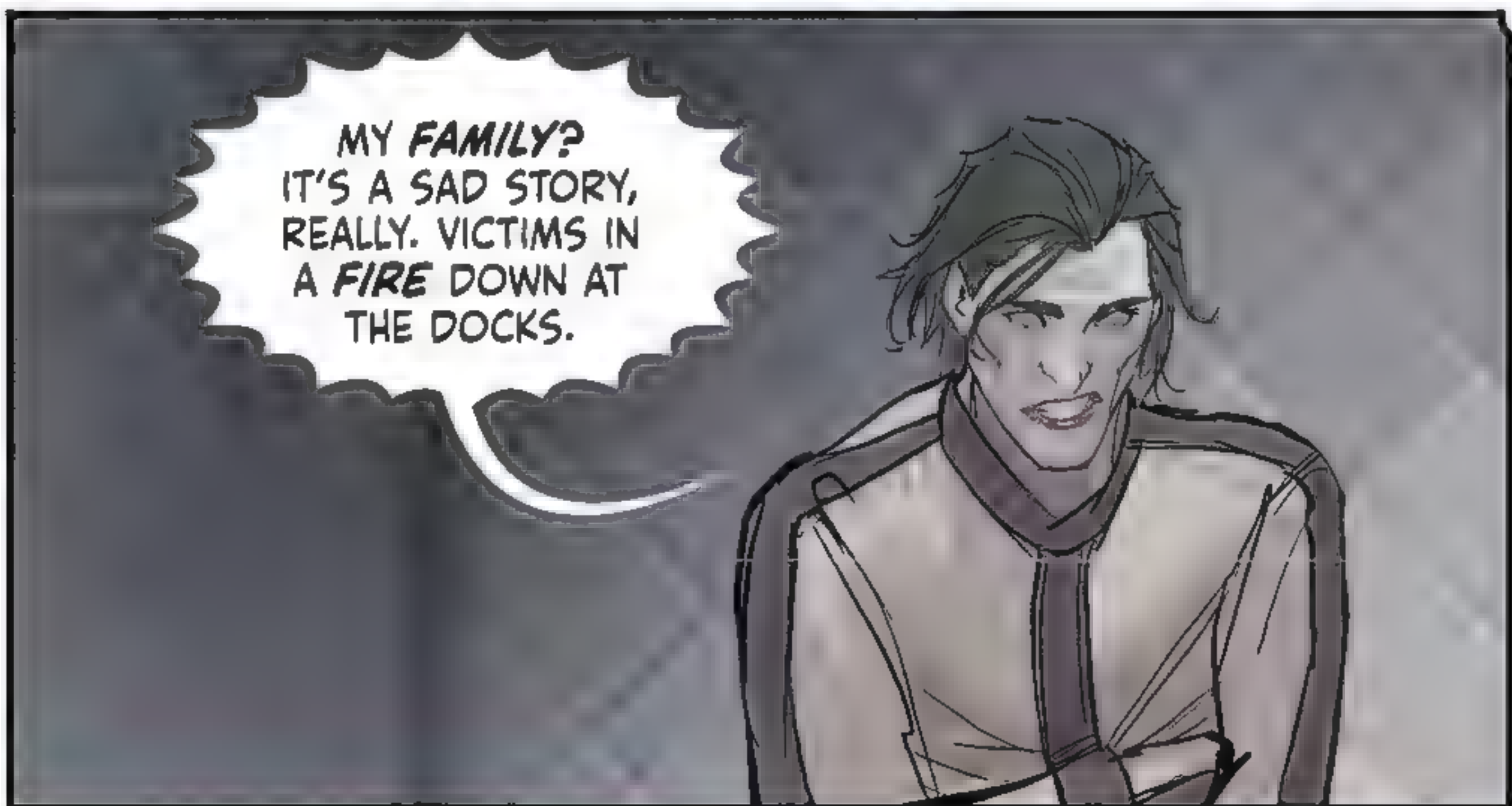
PUTTING THE FIRST TAPE IN WAS ITS OWN SPECIAL KIND OF NIGHTMARE.



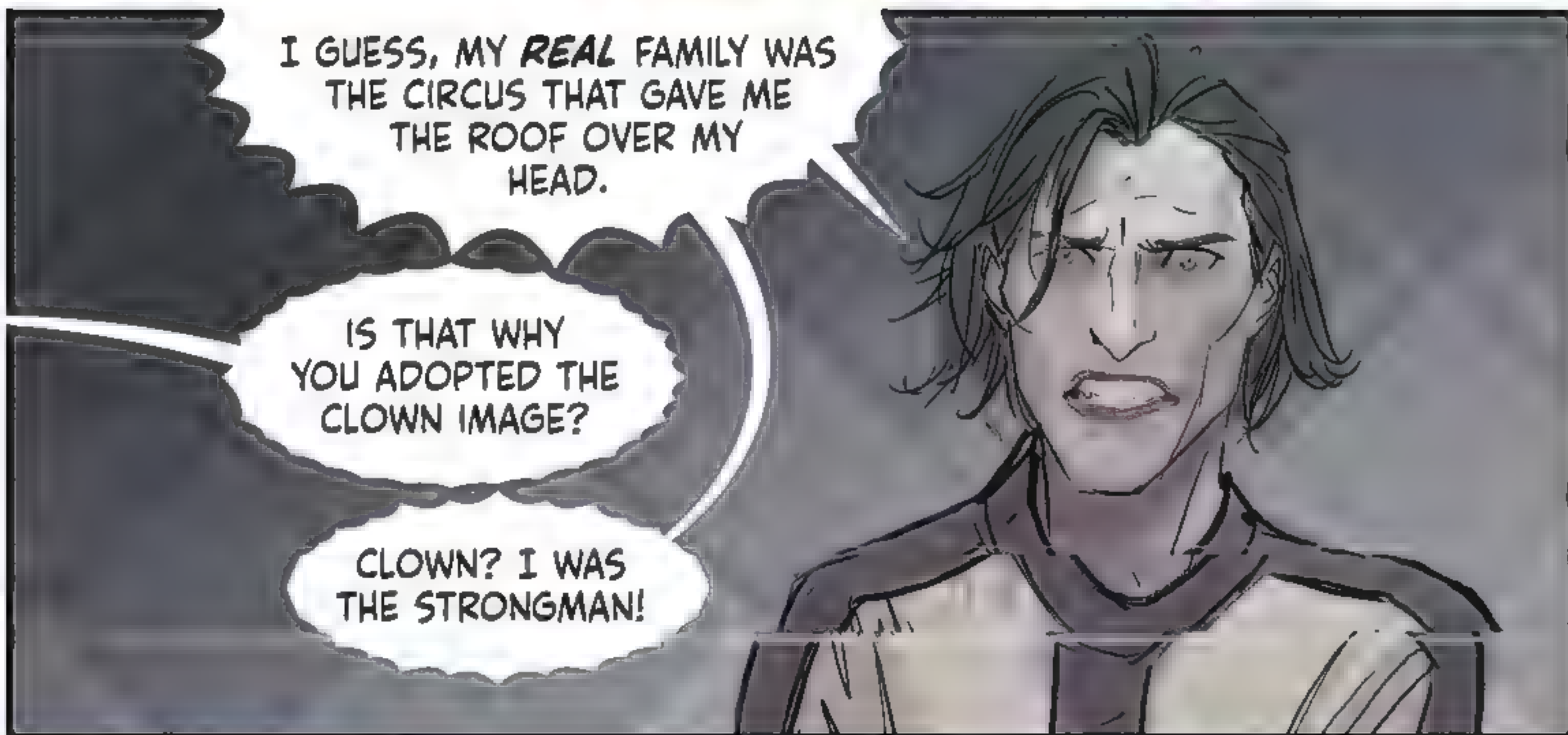
BUT THEN, THE TAPE STARTED ROLLING AND IT ALL JUST FELT...



UNDERWHELMING.



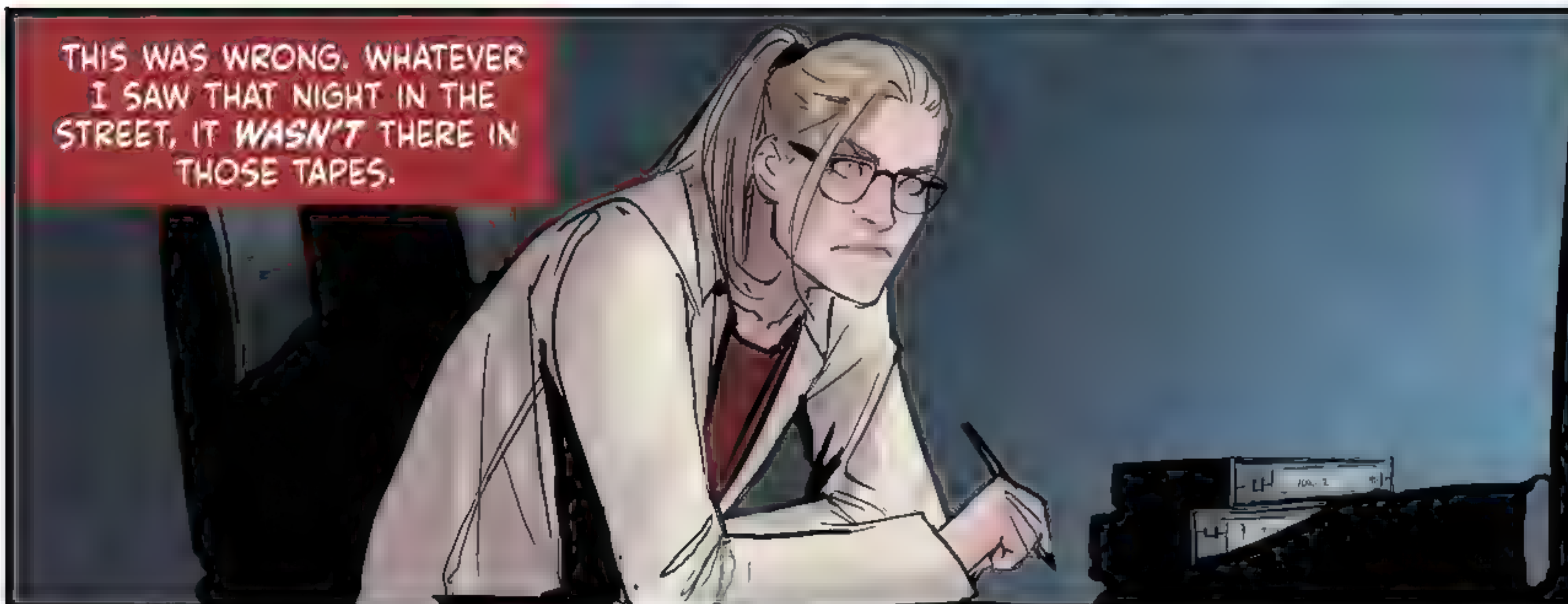
MY *FAMILY*? IT'S A SAD STORY, REALLY. VICTIMS IN A *FIRE* DOWN AT THE DOCKS.



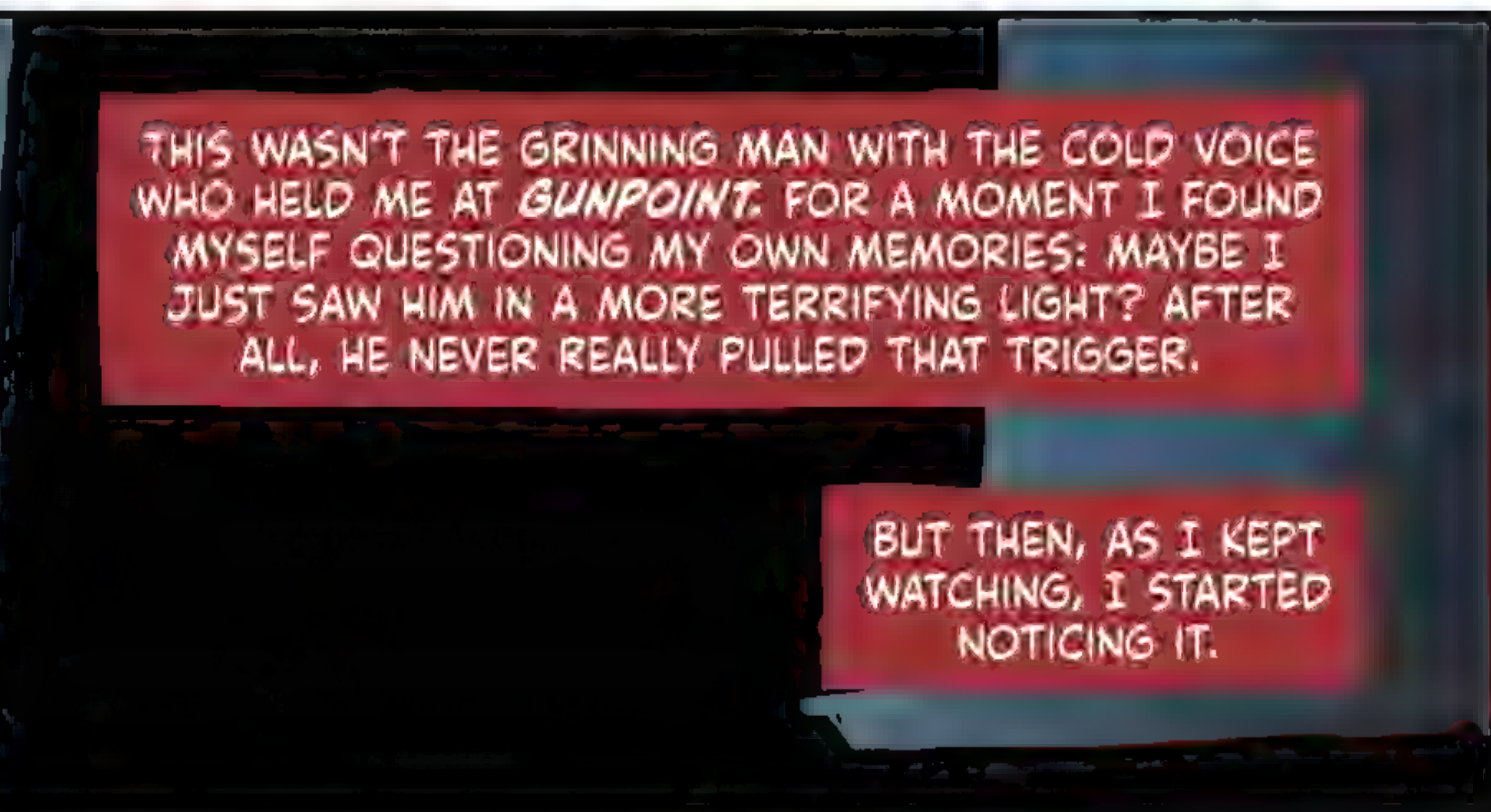
I GUESS, MY *REAL* FAMILY WAS THE CIRCUS THAT GAVE ME THE ROOF OVER MY HEAD.

IS THAT WHY YOU ADOPTED THE CLOWN IMAGE?

CLOWN? I WAS THE STRONGMAN!

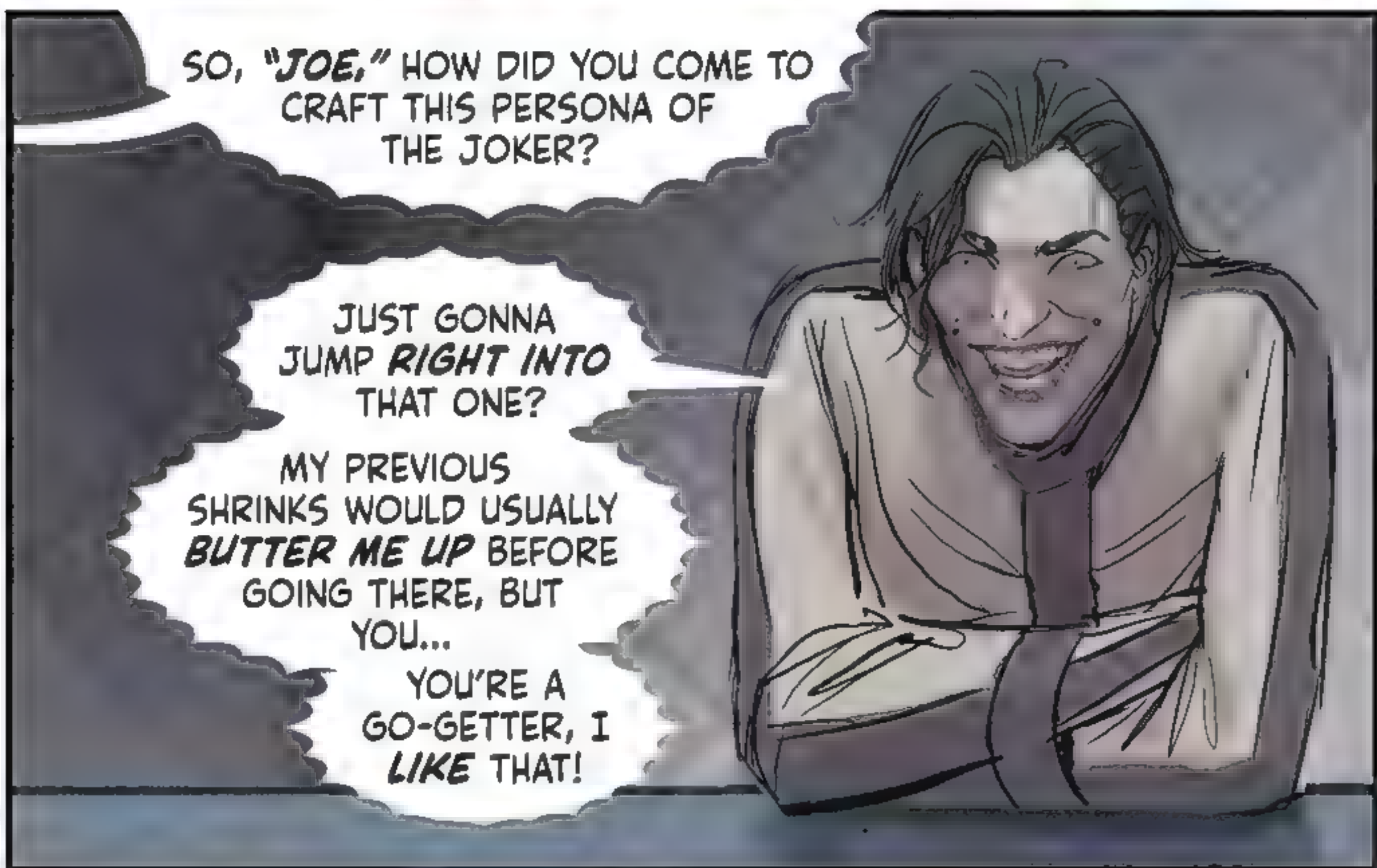


THIS WAS WRONG. WHATEVER I SAW THAT NIGHT IN THE STREET, IT *WASN'T* THERE IN THOSE TAPES.



THIS WASN'T THE GRINNING MAN WITH THE COLD VOICE WHO HELD ME AT *SUNPOINT*. FOR A MOMENT I FOUND MYSELF QUESTIONING MY OWN MEMORIES: MAYBE I JUST SAW HIM IN A MORE TERRIFYING LIGHT? AFTER ALL, HE NEVER REALLY PULLED THAT TRIGGER.

BUT THEN, AS I KEPT WATCHING, I STARTED NOTICING IT.

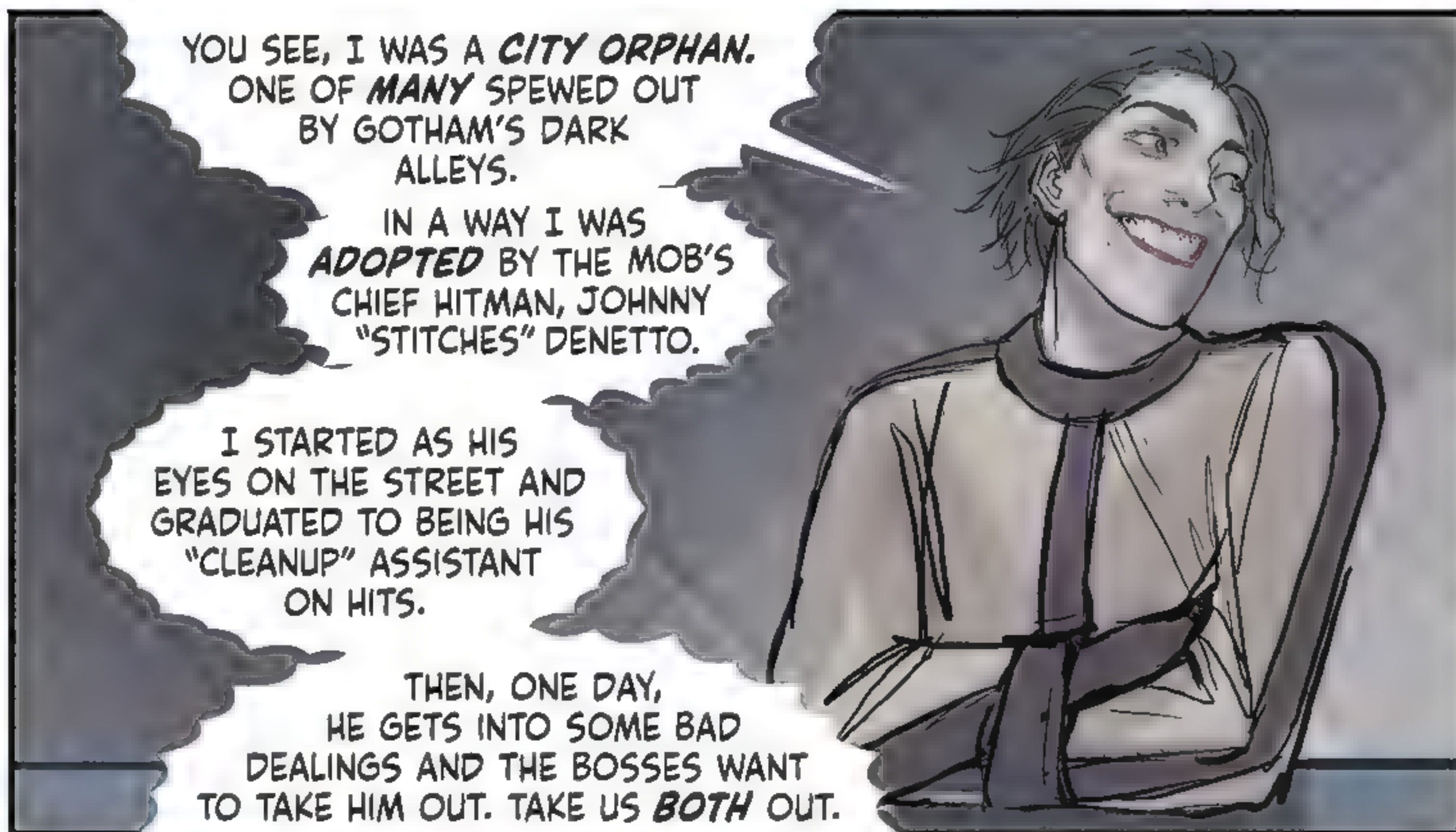


SO, "*JOE*," HOW DID YOU COME TO CRAFT THIS PERSONA OF THE JOKER?

JUST GONNA JUMP *RIGHT INTO* THAT ONE?

MY PREVIOUS SHRINKS WOULD USUALLY *BUTTER ME UP* BEFORE GOING THERE, BUT YOU...

YOU'RE A GO-GETTER, I *LIKE* THAT!

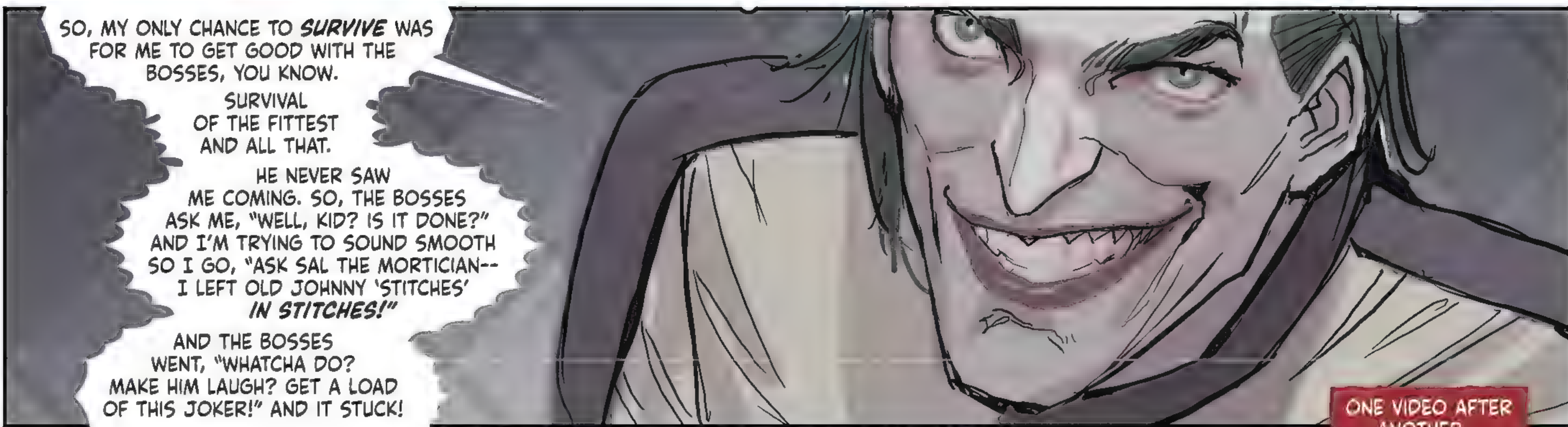


YOU SEE, I WAS A *CITY ORPHAN*. ONE OF *MANY* SPEWED OUT BY GOTHAM'S DARK ALLEYS.

IN A WAY I WAS *ADOPTED* BY THE MOB'S CHIEF HITMAN, JOHNNY "STITCHES" DENETTO.

I STARTED AS HIS EYES ON THE STREET AND GRADUATED TO BEING HIS "CLEANUP" ASSISTANT ON HITS.

THEN, ONE DAY, HE GETS INTO SOME BAD DEALINGS AND THE BOSSES WANT TO TAKE HIM OUT. TAKE US *BOTH* OUT.



SO, MY ONLY CHANCE TO *SURVIVE* WAS FOR ME TO GET GOOD WITH THE BOSSES, YOU KNOW.

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST AND ALL THAT.

HE NEVER SAW ME COMING. SO, THE BOSSES ASK ME, "WELL, KID? IS IT DONE?" AND I'M TRYING TO SOUND SMOOTH SO I GO, "ASK SAL THE MORTICIAN-- I LEFT OLD JOHNNY 'STITCHES' *IN STITCHES!*"

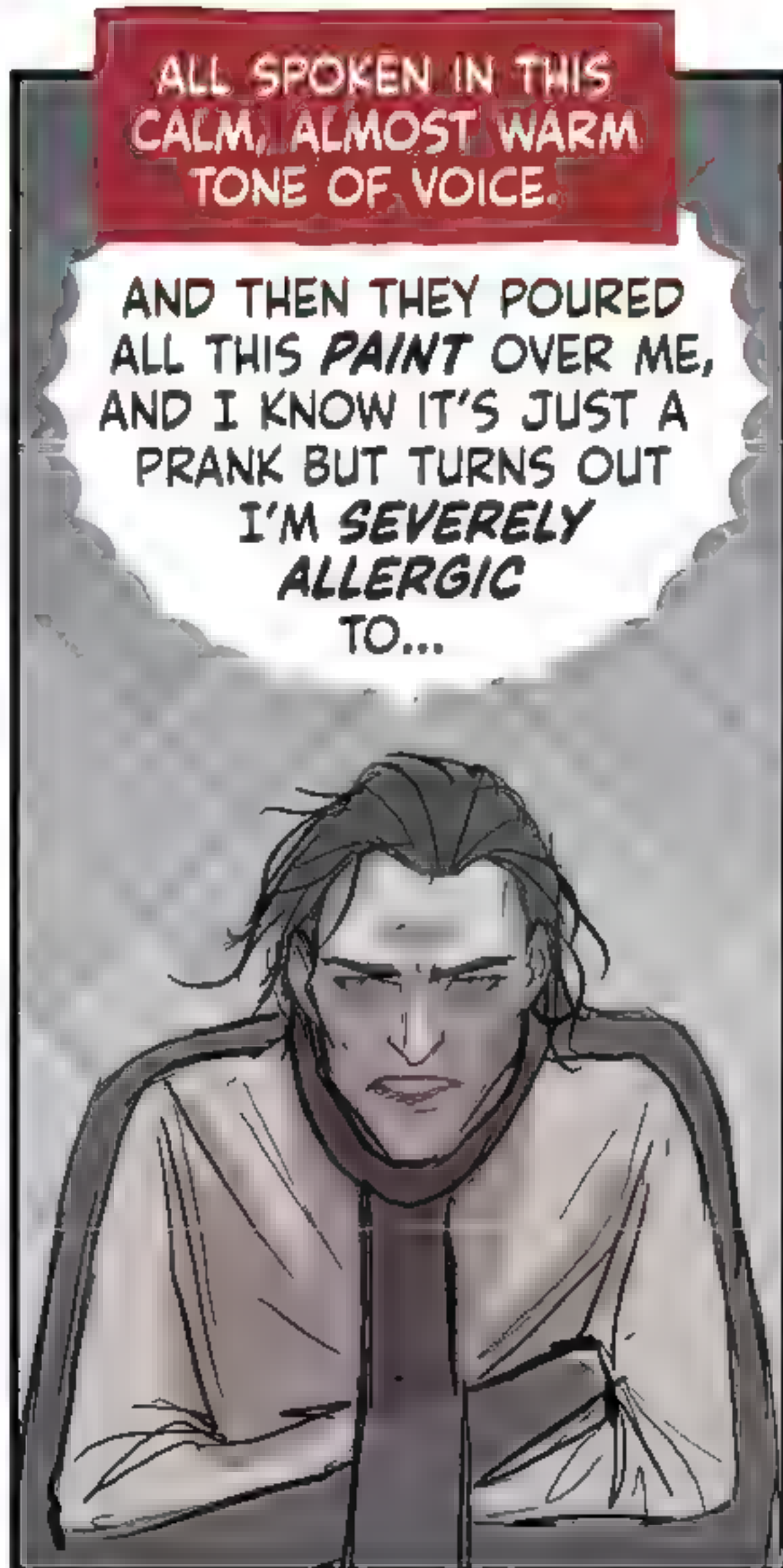
AND THE BOSSES WENT, "WHATCHA DO? MAKE HIM LAUGH? GET A LOAD OF THIS JOKER!" AND IT STUCK!

ONE VIDEO AFTER ANOTHER...



LIE. AFTER LIE
AFTER LIE.

MY REAL
NAME IS **WILLIAM
JOHNSON**.
BILLY JAY TO
FRIENDS.



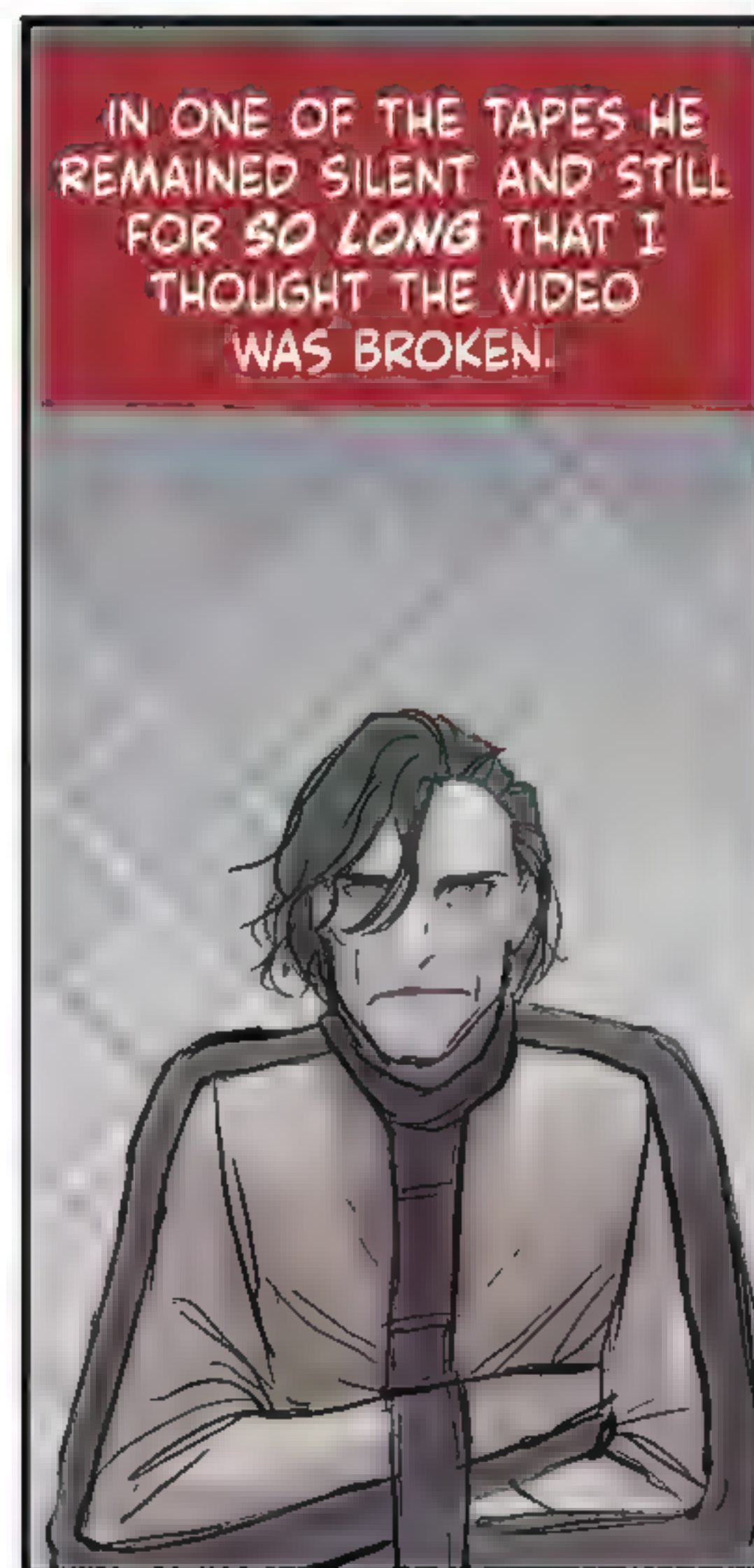
ALL SPOKEN IN THIS
CALM, ALMOST WARM
TONE OF VOICE.

AND THEN THEY POURED
ALL THIS **PAINT** OVER ME,
AND I KNOW IT'S JUST A
PRANK BUT TURNS OUT
I'M **SEVERELY
ALLERGIC**
TO...

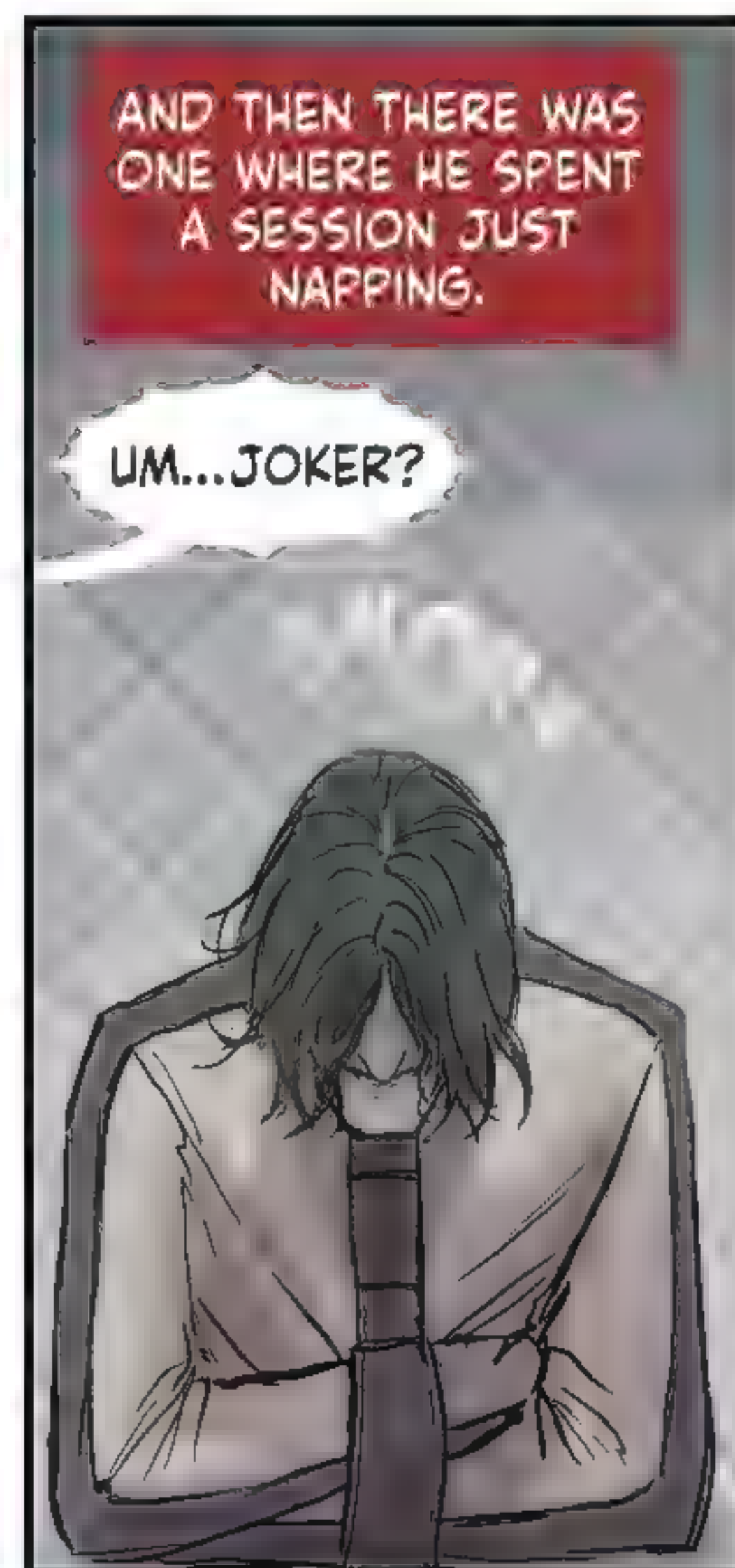


AND MY SON'S LAST
WORDS WERE, "**SMILE,
DAD...FOR ME...**"

AND I
DID. I KEPT
SMILING.

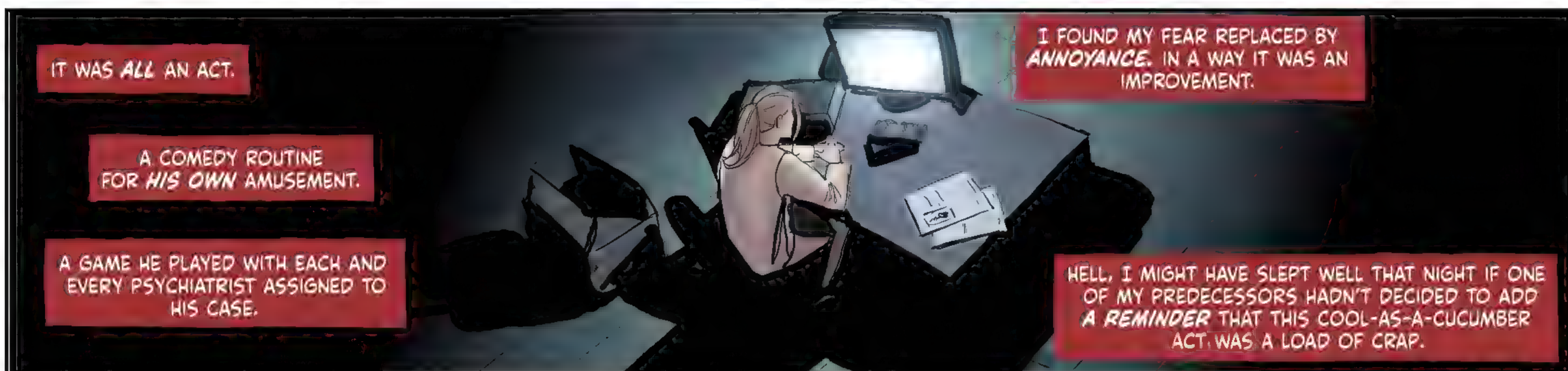


IN ONE OF THE TAPES HE
REMAINED SILENT AND STILL
FOR **SO LONG** THAT I
THOUGHT THE VIDEO
WAS BROKEN.



AND THEN THERE WAS
ONE WHERE HE SPENT
A SESSION JUST
NAPPING.

UM...JOKER?



IT WAS **ALL** AN ACT.

A COMEDY ROUTINE
FOR **HIS OWN** AMUSEMENT.

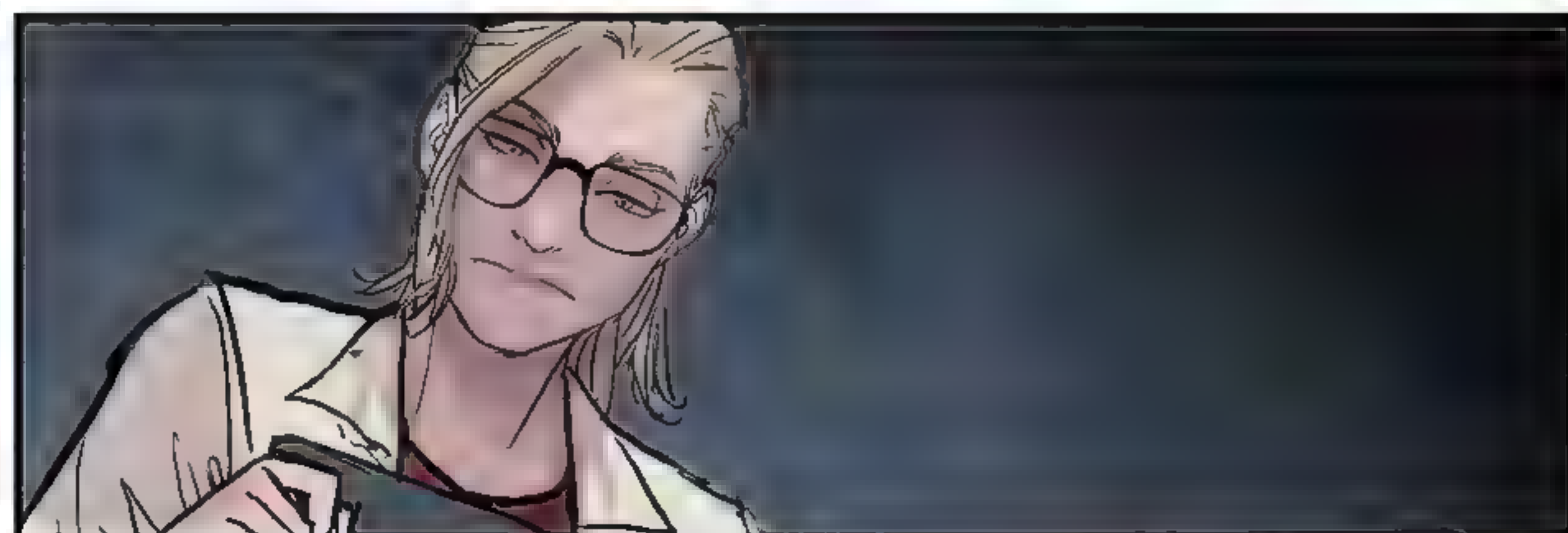
A GAME HE PLAYED WITH EACH AND
EVERY PSYCHIATRIST ASSIGNED TO
HIS CASE.

I FOUND MY FEAR REPLACED BY
ANNOYANCE. IN A WAY IT WAS AN
IMPROVEMENT.

HELL, I MIGHT HAVE SLEPT WELL THAT NIGHT IF ONE
OF MY PREDECESSORS HADN'T DECIDED TO ADD
A **REMINDER** THAT THIS COOL-AS-A-CUCUMBER
ACT WAS A LOAD OF CRAP.



THE ONLY TAPE THAT
CAPTURES **THE REAL** HIM,
IF ONLY FOR A MOMENT.



GIVE HIM THE
CHAIR!

JOKER SENTENCED



HEY!

KILL
THAT FUCKING
MONSTER!



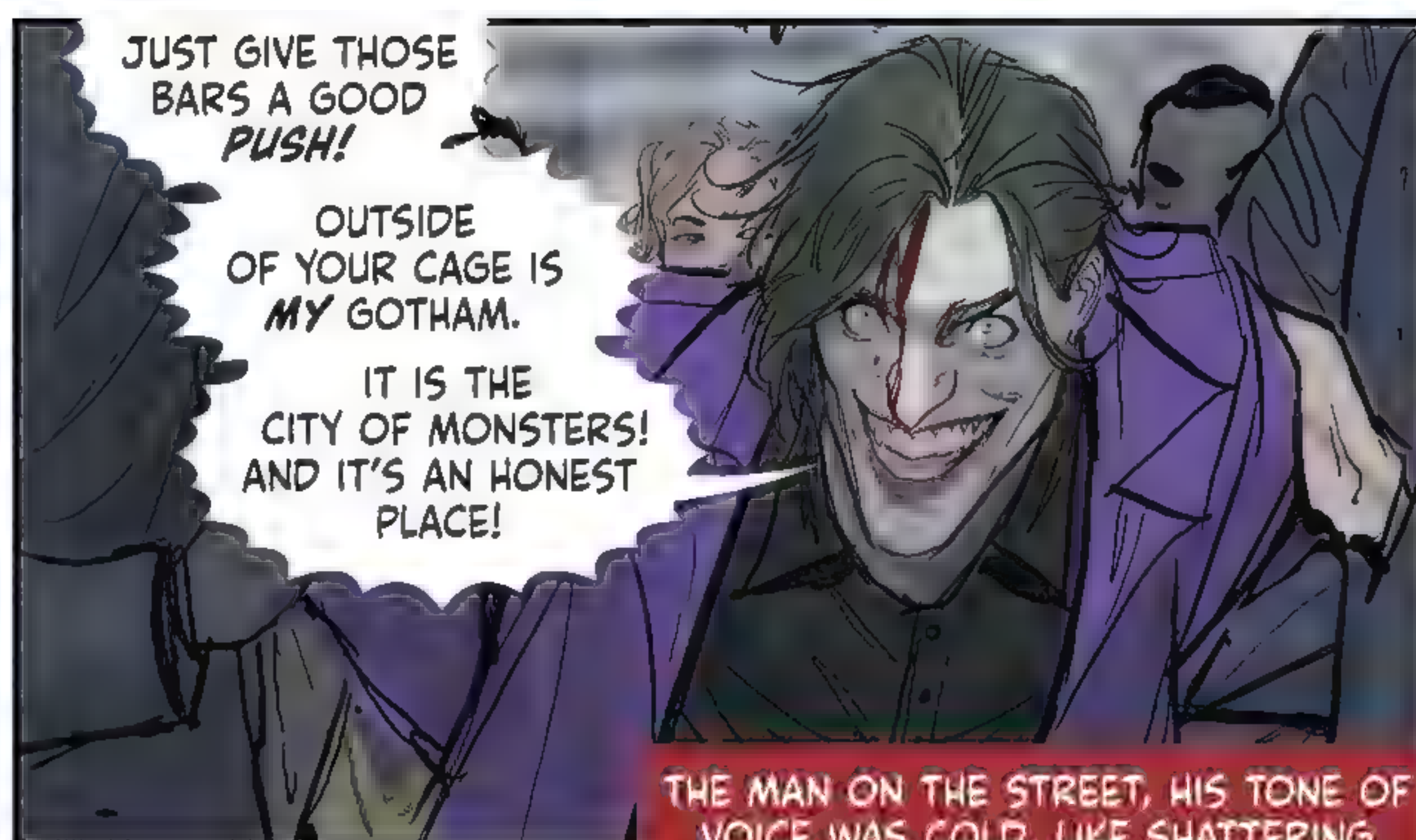
THERE HE WAS.

A MONSTER,
HUH?

HEH!

WE'RE ALL
MONSTERS IN A CIVILIZED
CAGE, IT JUST TAKES THE
RIGHT KIND OF PAIN AND
FEAR TO **BREAK
THE LOCK**.

SEEMS
YOU'RE ALMOST
THERE YOURSELF,
BUDDY.



JUST GIVE THOSE
BARS A GOOD
PUSH!

OUTSIDE
OF YOUR CAGE IS
MY GOTHAM.

IT IS THE
CITY OF MONSTERS!
AND IT'S AN HONEST
PLACE!

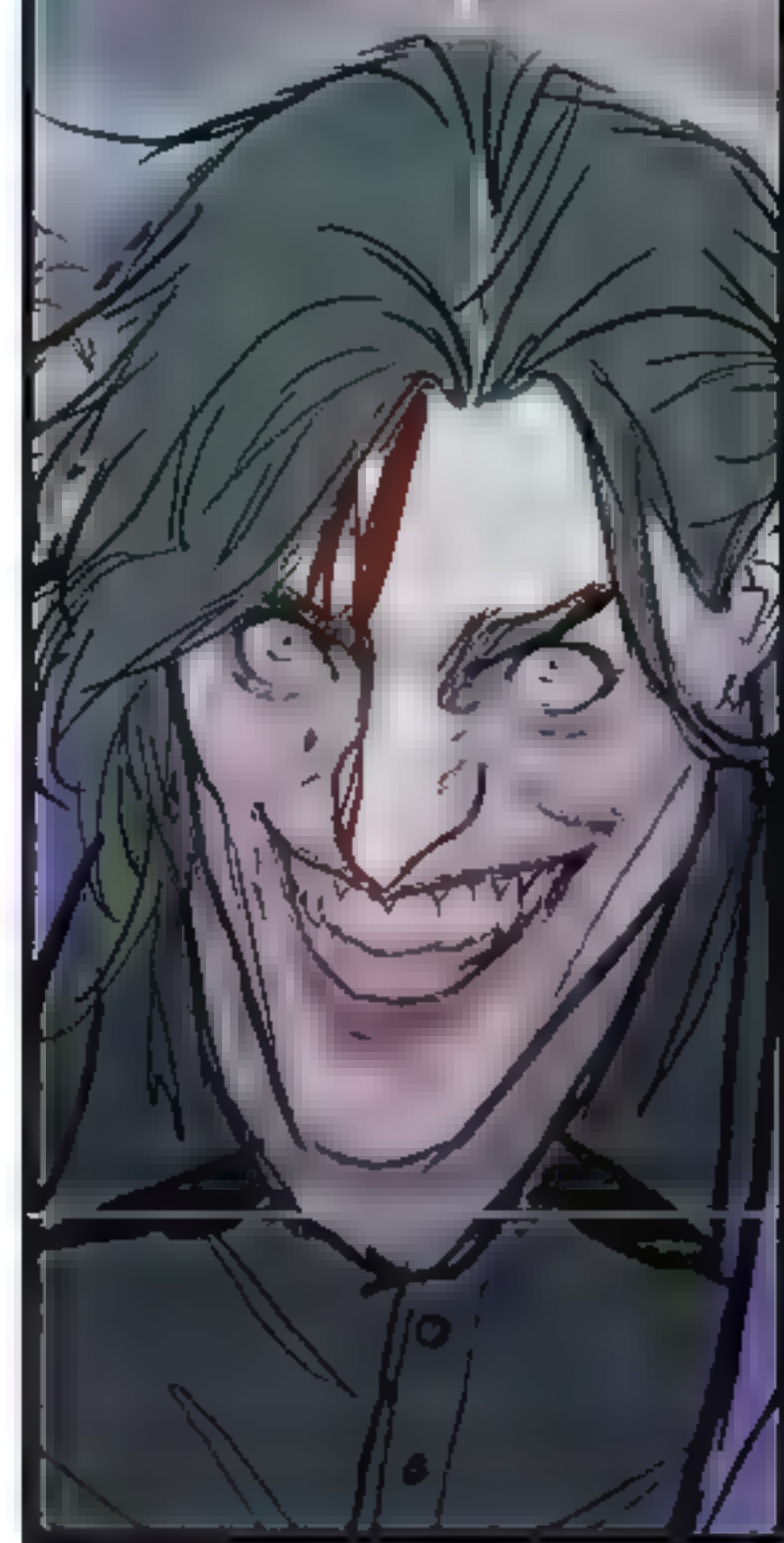
THE MAN ON THE STREET, HIS TONE OF
VOICE WAS COLD, LIKE SHATTERING
GLASS, LIKE **THAT NIGHT**.



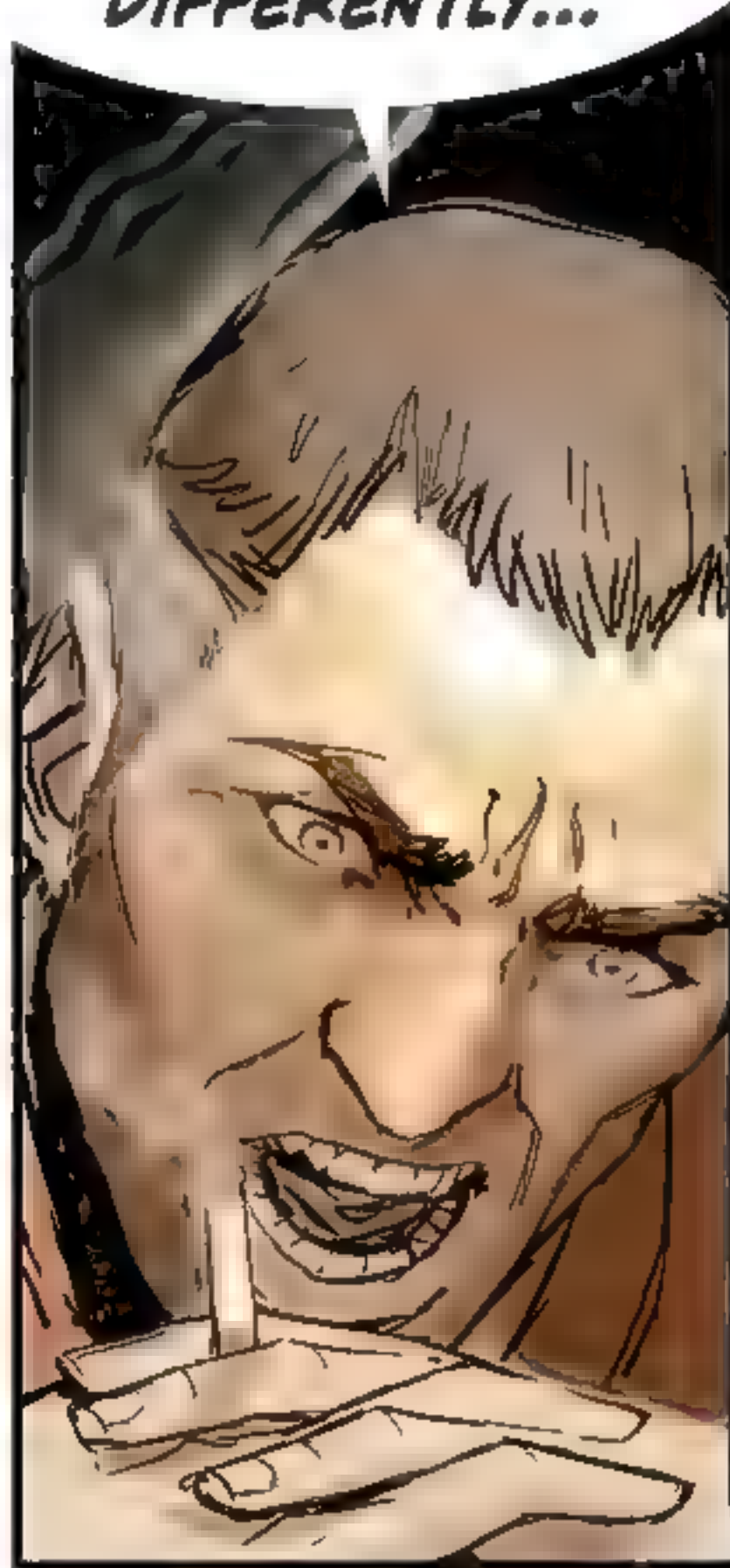
BUT, MORE THAN THAT,
IT WAS WHAT HE SAID.

WE'RE ALL MONSTERS
IN A CIVILIZED *CAGE*,
IT JUST TAKES THE
RIGHT KIND OF PAIN
AND FEAR TO *BREAK*
THE LOCK.

SEEMS YOU'RE
ALMOST THERE
YOURSELF,
BUDDY.



SO I BROKE *MY OATH*
THAT DAY...BLEW HER
BRAINS OUT...EMPTIED
THE WHOLE DAMNED
CLIP...SHIT LIKE THAT,
IT SNAPS SOMETHING
INSIDE OF YOU...YOU
START SEEING THE
WORLD
DIFFERENTLY...



I *HAD* TO
INTERVIEW HIM.

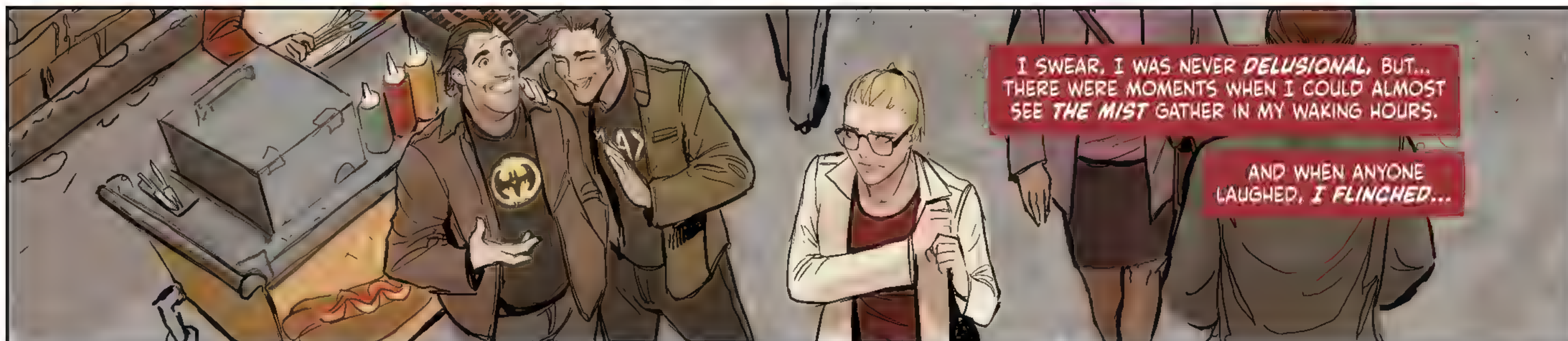
MORE THAN EVER,
I KNEW THIS.



AND MORE THAN
EVER, I FEARED IT.

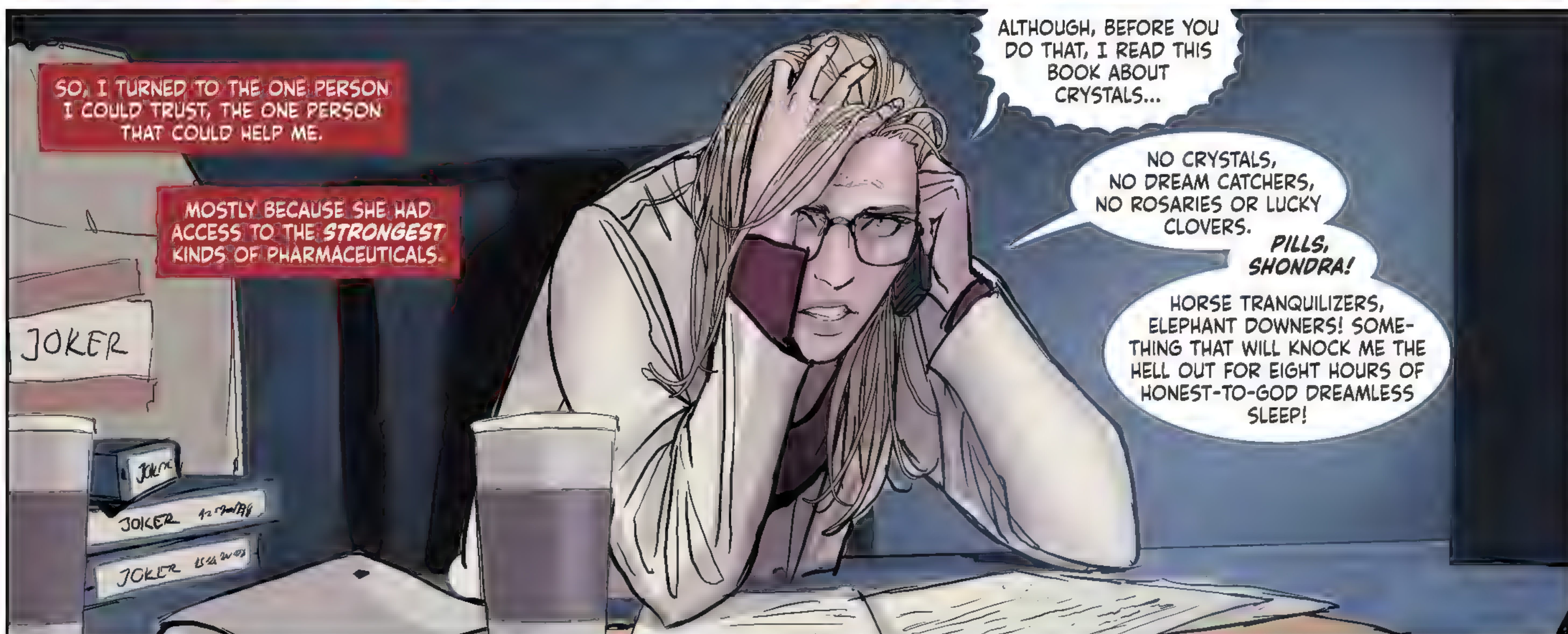


AND WITH THAT FEAR, AND ALL THE WEIGHT
OF MY THOUGHTS, MY DREAMS WORSENERD
TO A LEVEL I THOUGHT *UNIMAGINABLE*.



I SWEAR, I WAS NEVER *DELUSIONAL*, BUT...
THERE WERE MOMENTS WHEN I COULD ALMOST
SEE *THE MIST* GATHER IN MY WAKING HOURS.

AND WHEN ANYONE
LAUGHED, I *FLINCHED...*



SO, I TURNED TO THE ONE PERSON
I COULD TRUST, THE ONE PERSON
THAT COULD HELP ME.

MOSTLY BECAUSE SHE HAD
ACCESS TO THE *STRONGEST*
KINDS OF PHARMACEUTICALS.

ALTHOUGH, BEFORE YOU
DO THAT, I READ THIS
BOOK ABOUT
CRYSTALS...

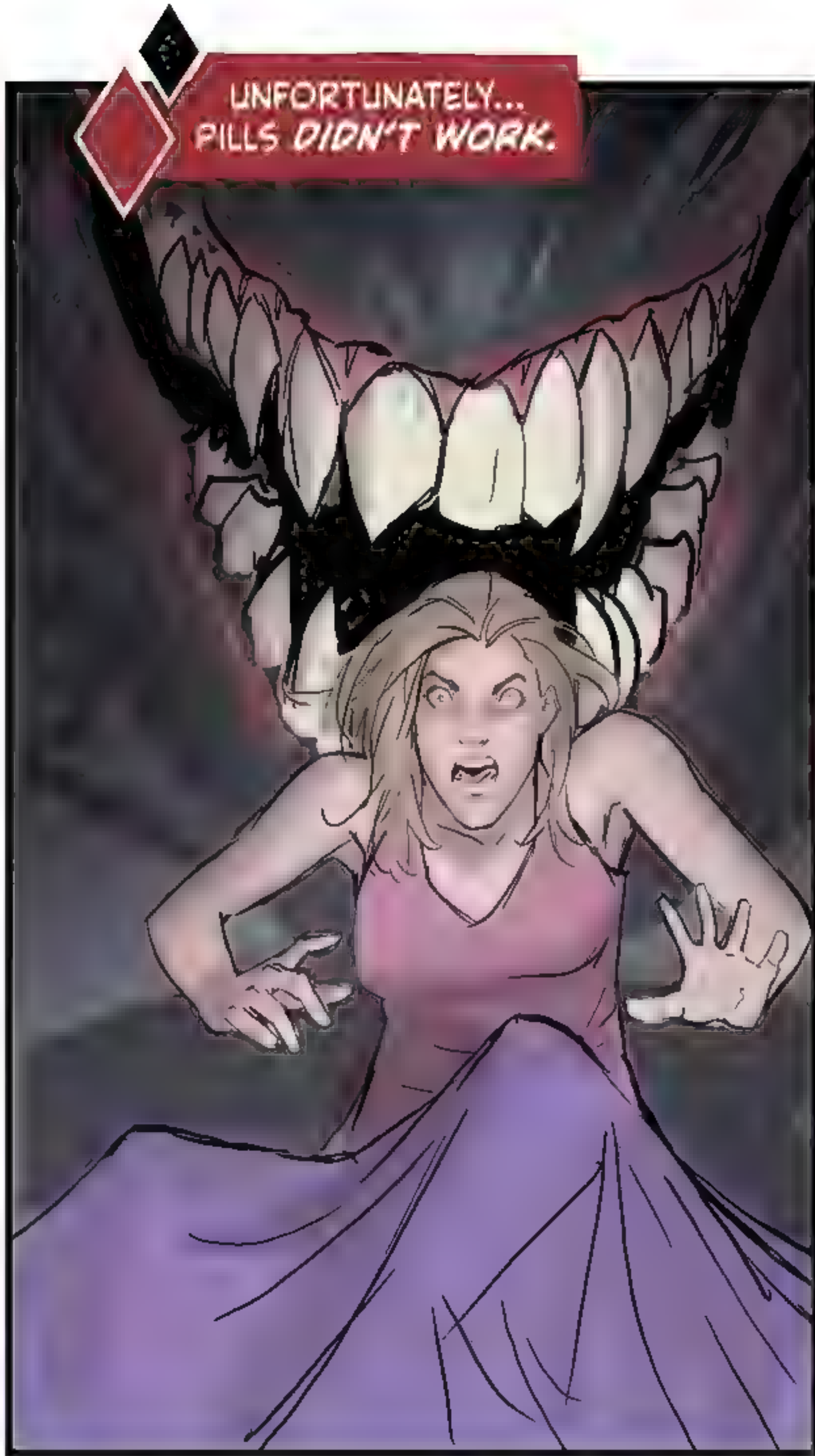
NO CRYSTALS,
NO DREAM CATCHERS,
NO ROSARIES OR LUCKY
CLOVERS.

PILLS,
SHONDRA!

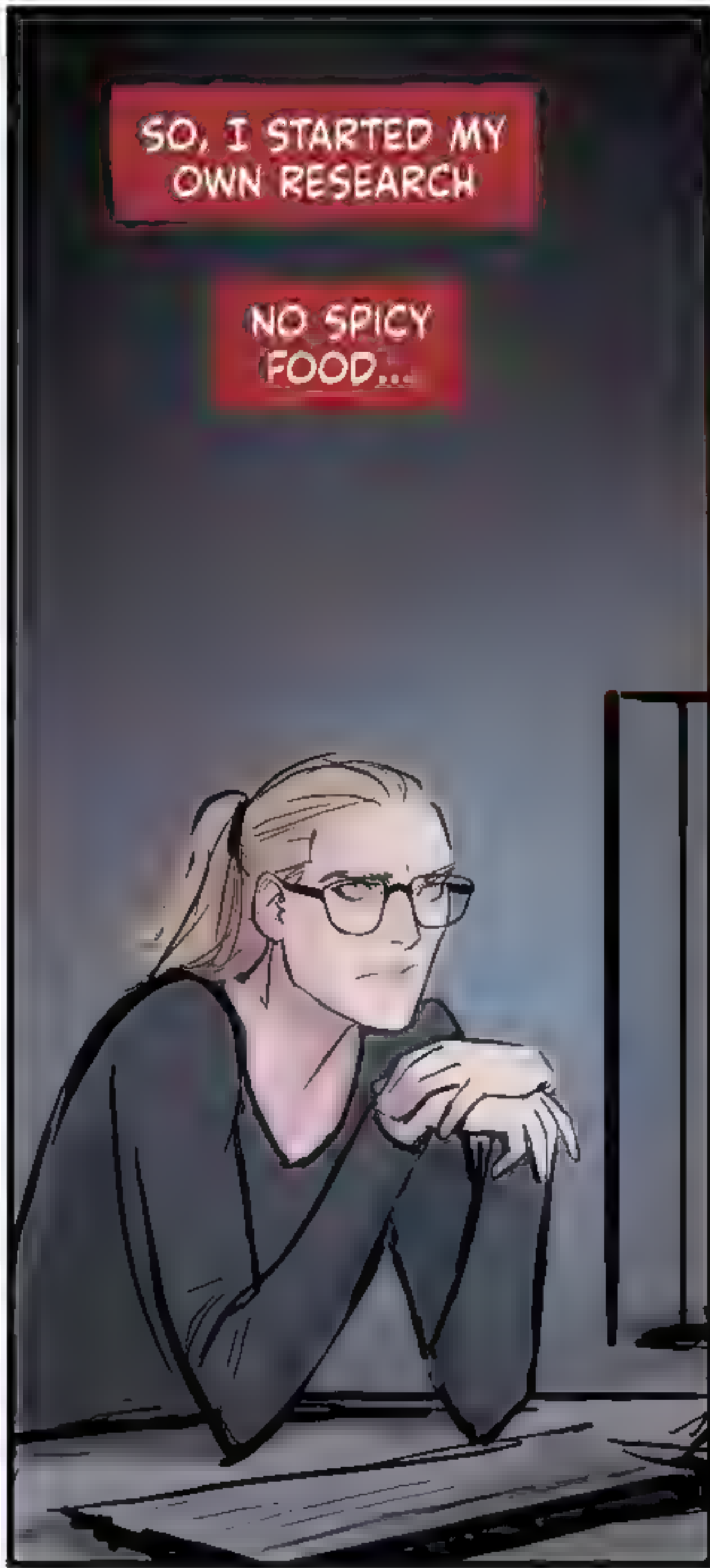
HORSE TRANQUILIZERS,
ELEPHANT DOWNERS! SOME-
THING THAT WILL KNOCK ME THE
HELL OUT FOR EIGHT HOURS OF
HONEST-TO-GOD DREAMLESS
SLEEP!

JOKER

JOKER
JOKER
JOKER

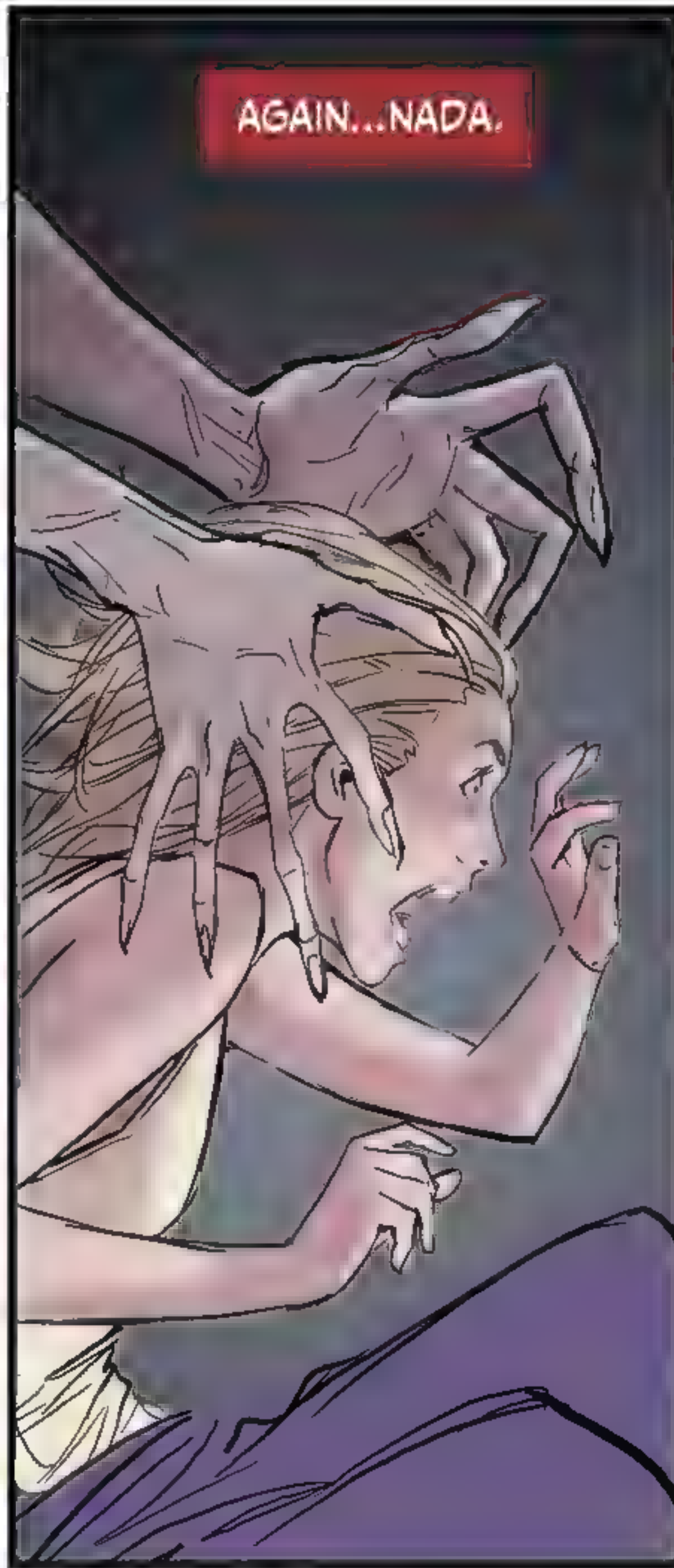


UNFORTUNATELY...
PILLS DIDN'T WORK.



SO, I STARTED MY
OWN RESEARCH

NO SPICY
FOOD...

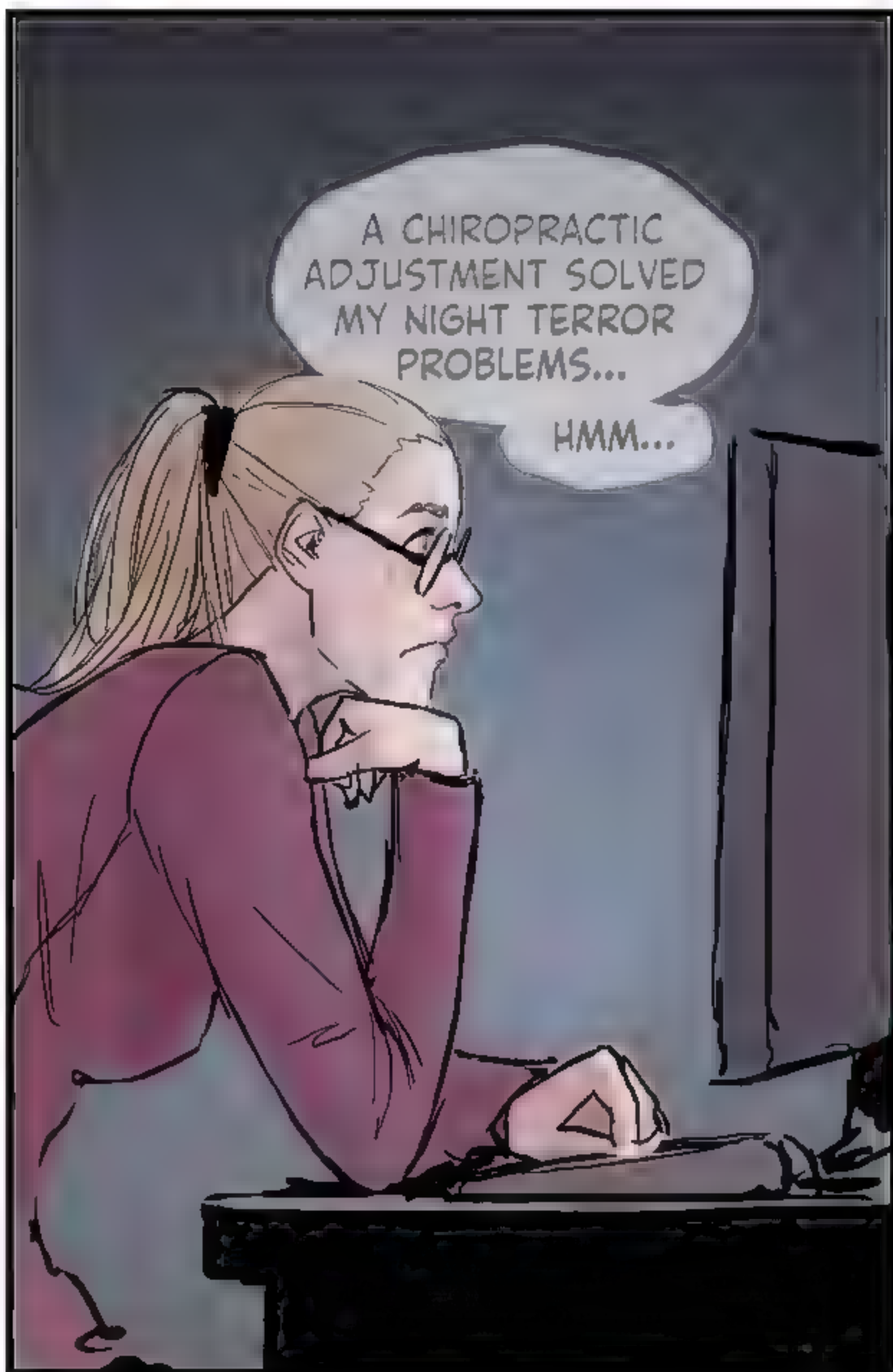


AGAIN...NADA.

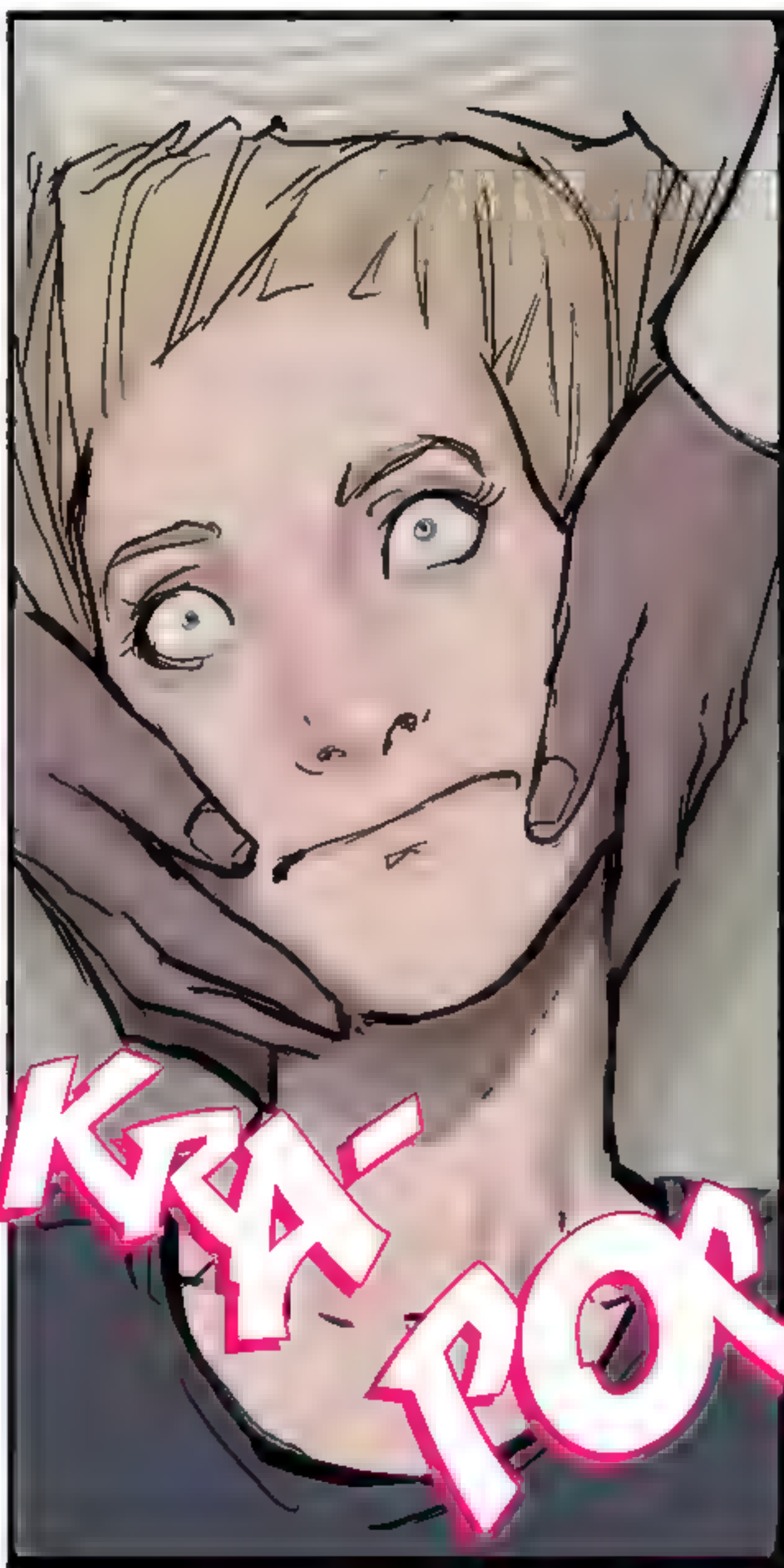


MILK/HONEY/VINEGAR/
TWELVE DIFFERENT
KINDS OF TEA BEFORE
SLEEP

NOPE.



A CHIROPRACTIC
ADJUSTMENT SOLVED
MY NIGHT TERROR
PROBLEMS...
HMM...



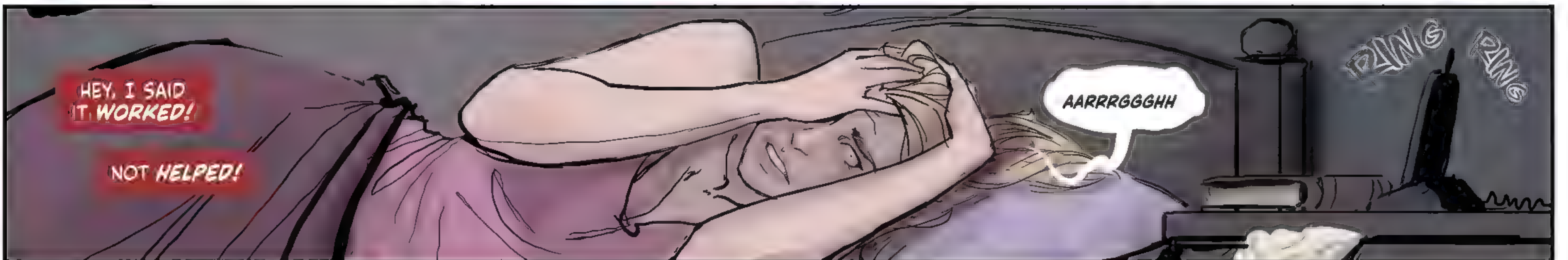
KRA-
POW



ZILCH. ALSO, BACK THEN, I
GENUINELY THOUGHT THAT WAS
THE MOST UNCOMFORTABLE
ORDEAL MY BONES AND
TENDONS WOULD EVER GO
THROUGH. **HAH!**



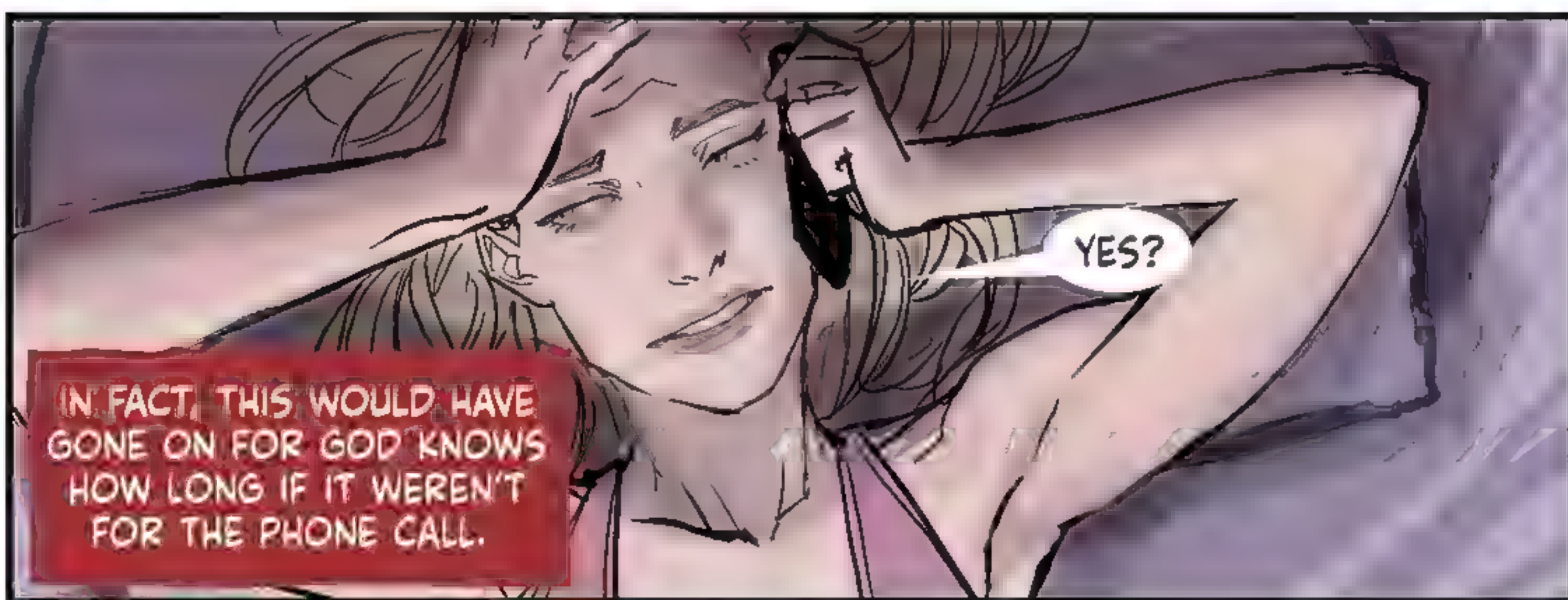
IN THE END, ONLY
ONE THING WORKED.



HEY, I SAID
IT WORKED!

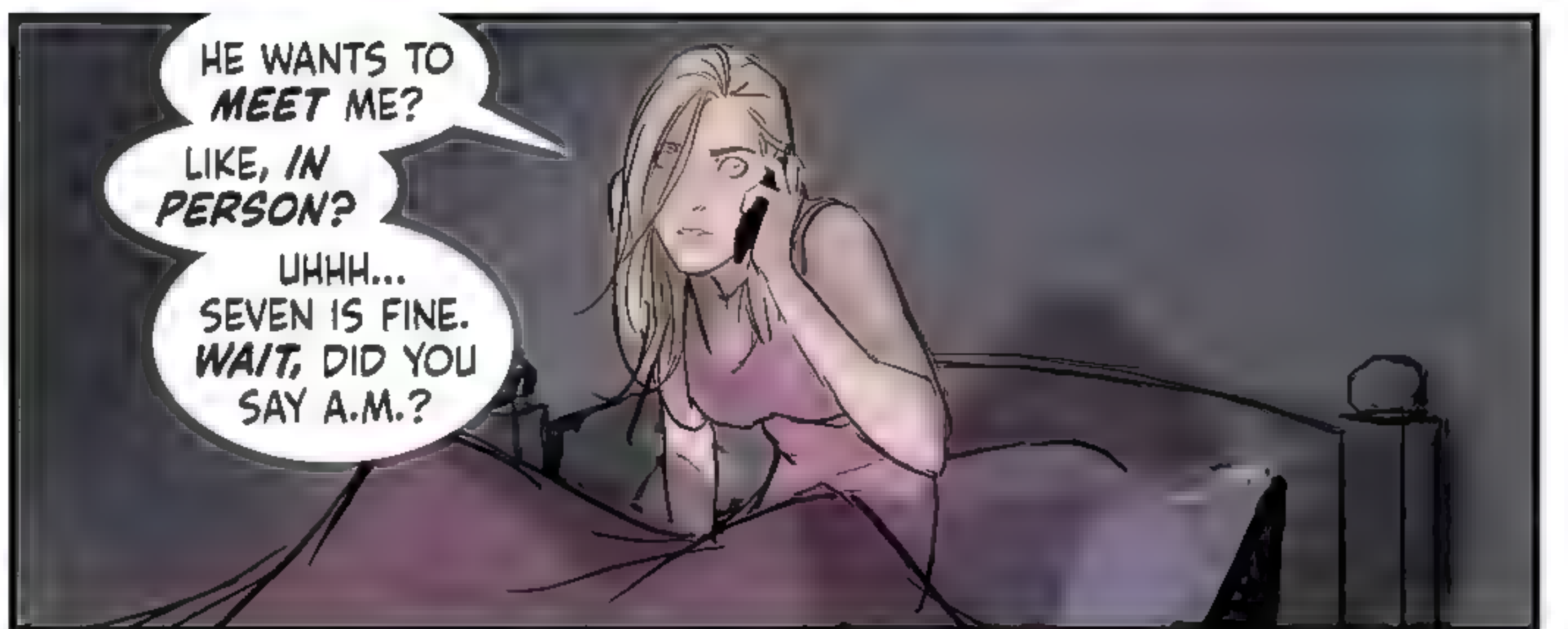
NOT **HELPED!**

AARRRGHHH



IN FACT, THIS WOULD HAVE
GONE ON FOR GOD KNOWS
HOW LONG IF IT WEREN'T
FOR THE PHONE CALL.

YES?

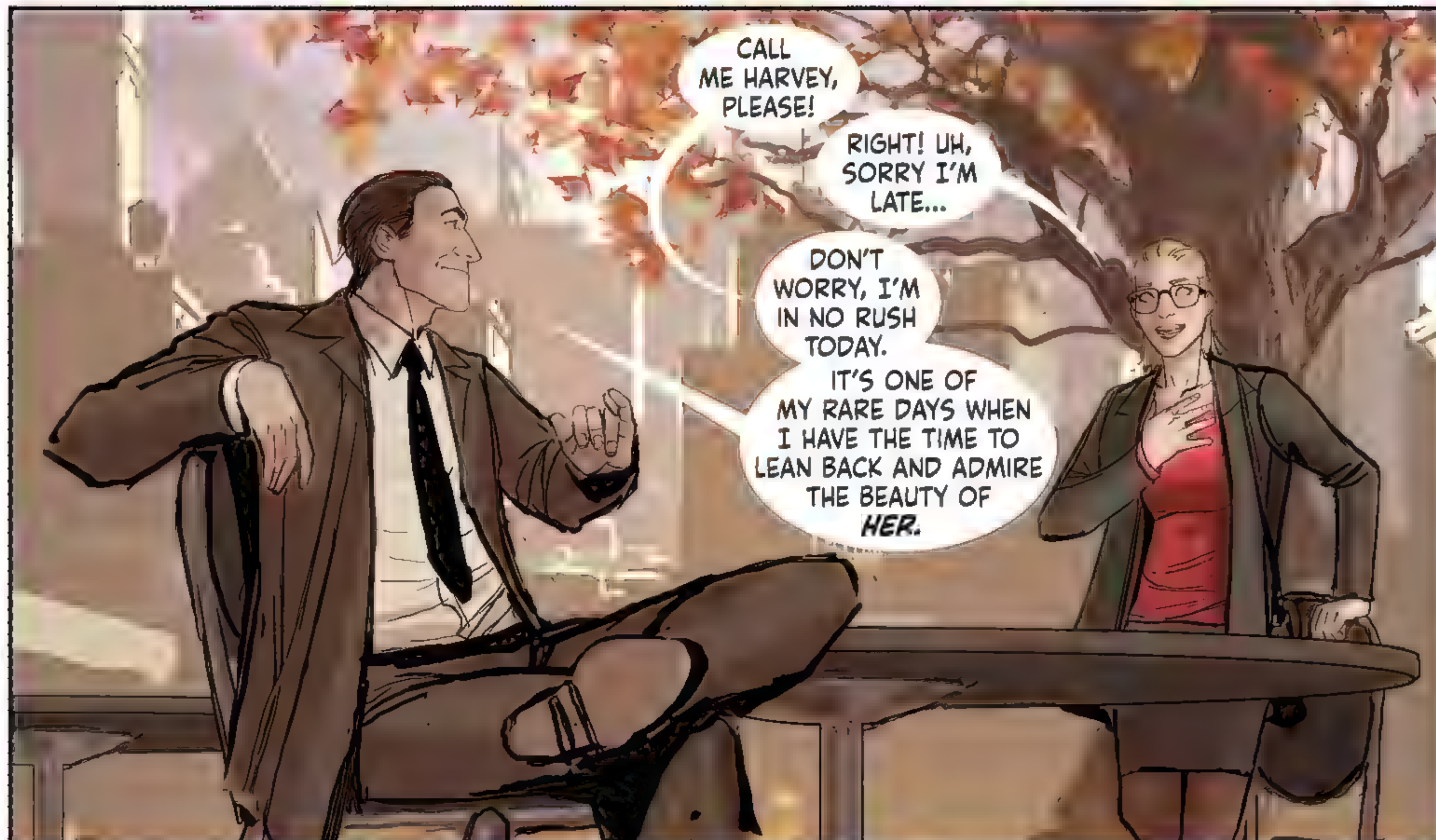


HE WANTS TO
MEET ME?
LIKE, IN
PERSON?
UHHH...
SEVEN IS FINE.
WAIT, DID YOU
SAY A.M.?



DR. QUINZEL!

OH, MR. DENT!

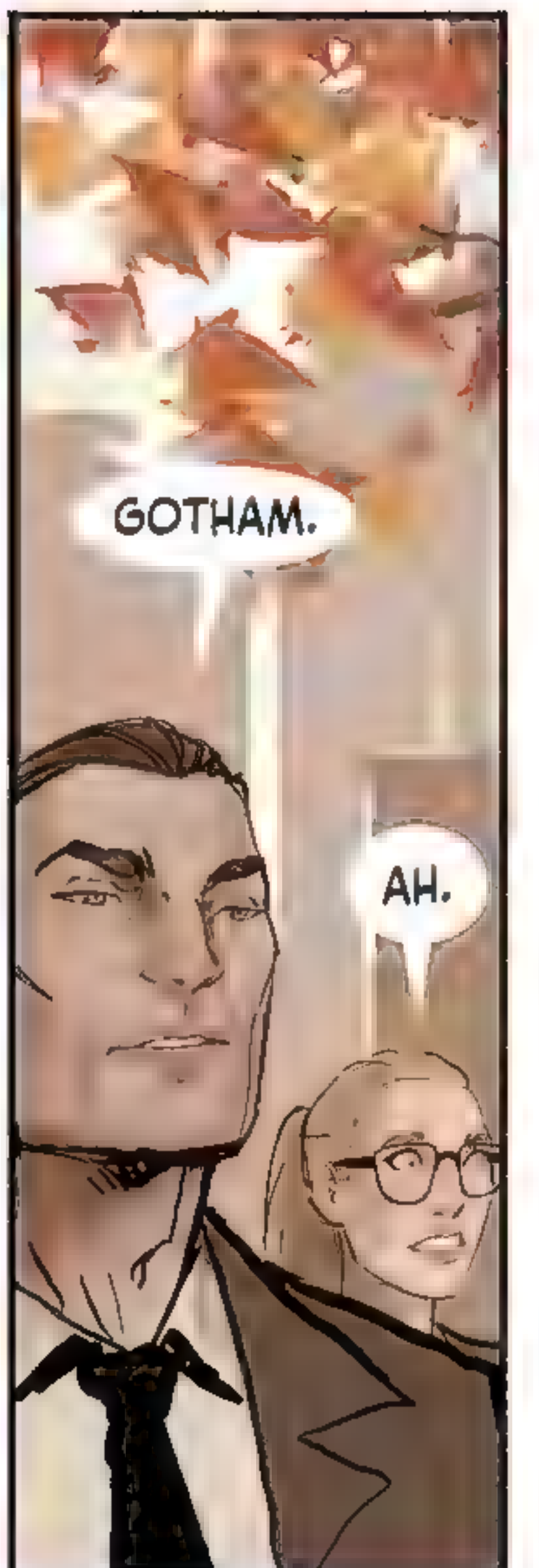
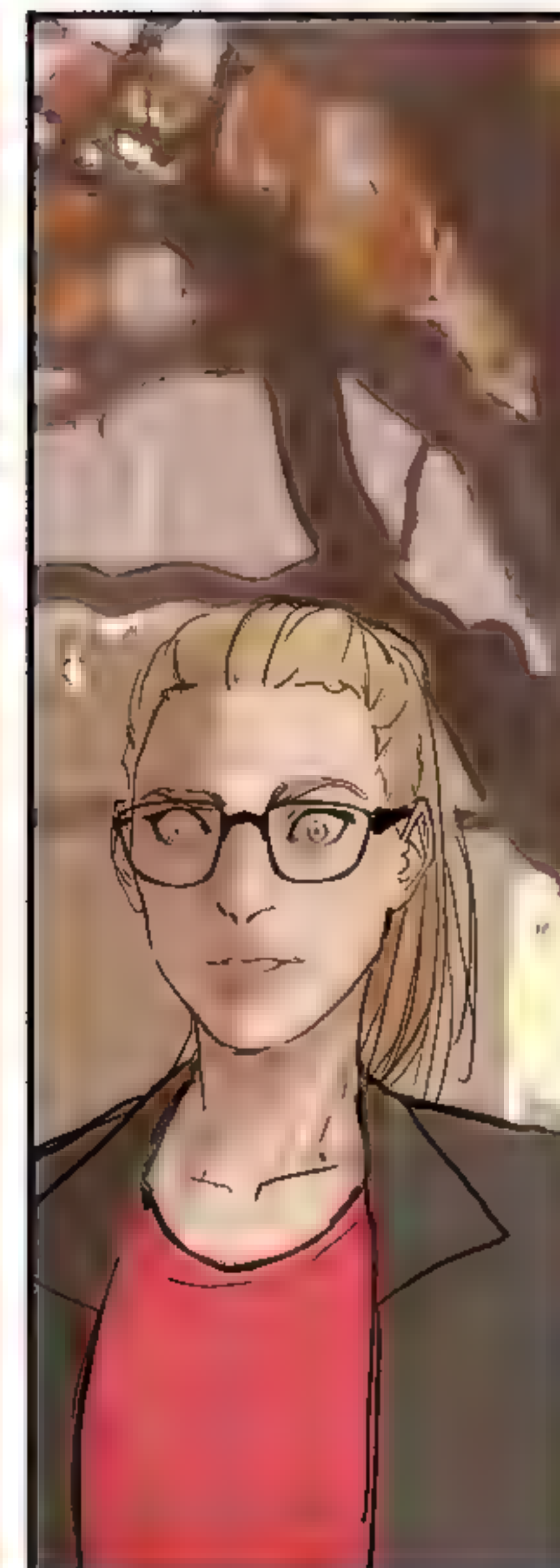


CALL ME HARVEY, PLEASE!

RIGHT! UH, SORRY I'M LATE...

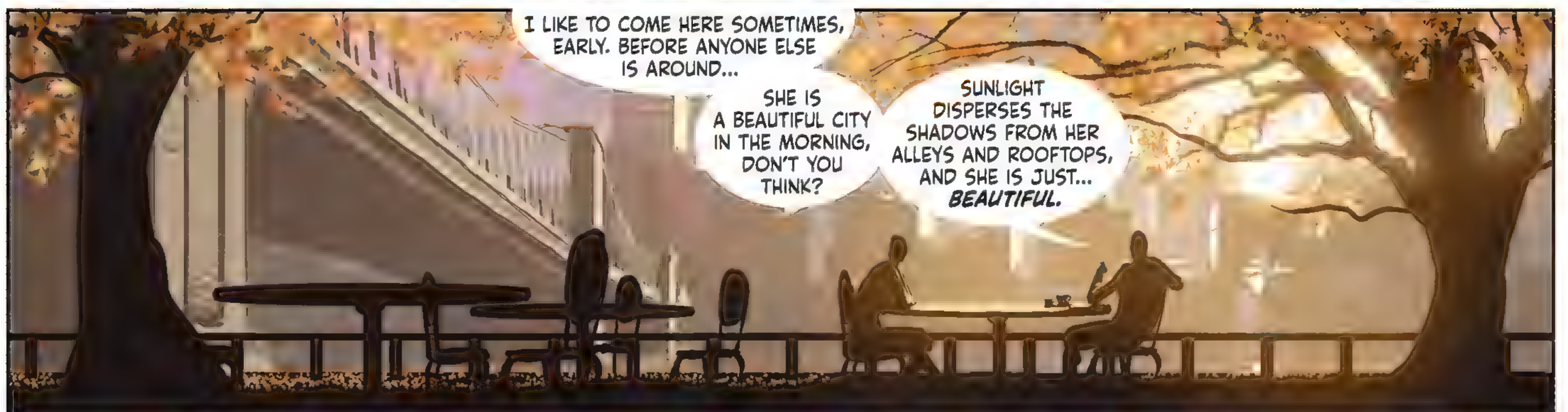
DON'T WORRY, I'M IN NO RUSH TODAY.

IT'S ONE OF MY RARE DAYS WHEN I HAVE THE TIME TO LEAN BACK AND ADMIRE THE BEAUTY OF *HER*.



GOTHAM.

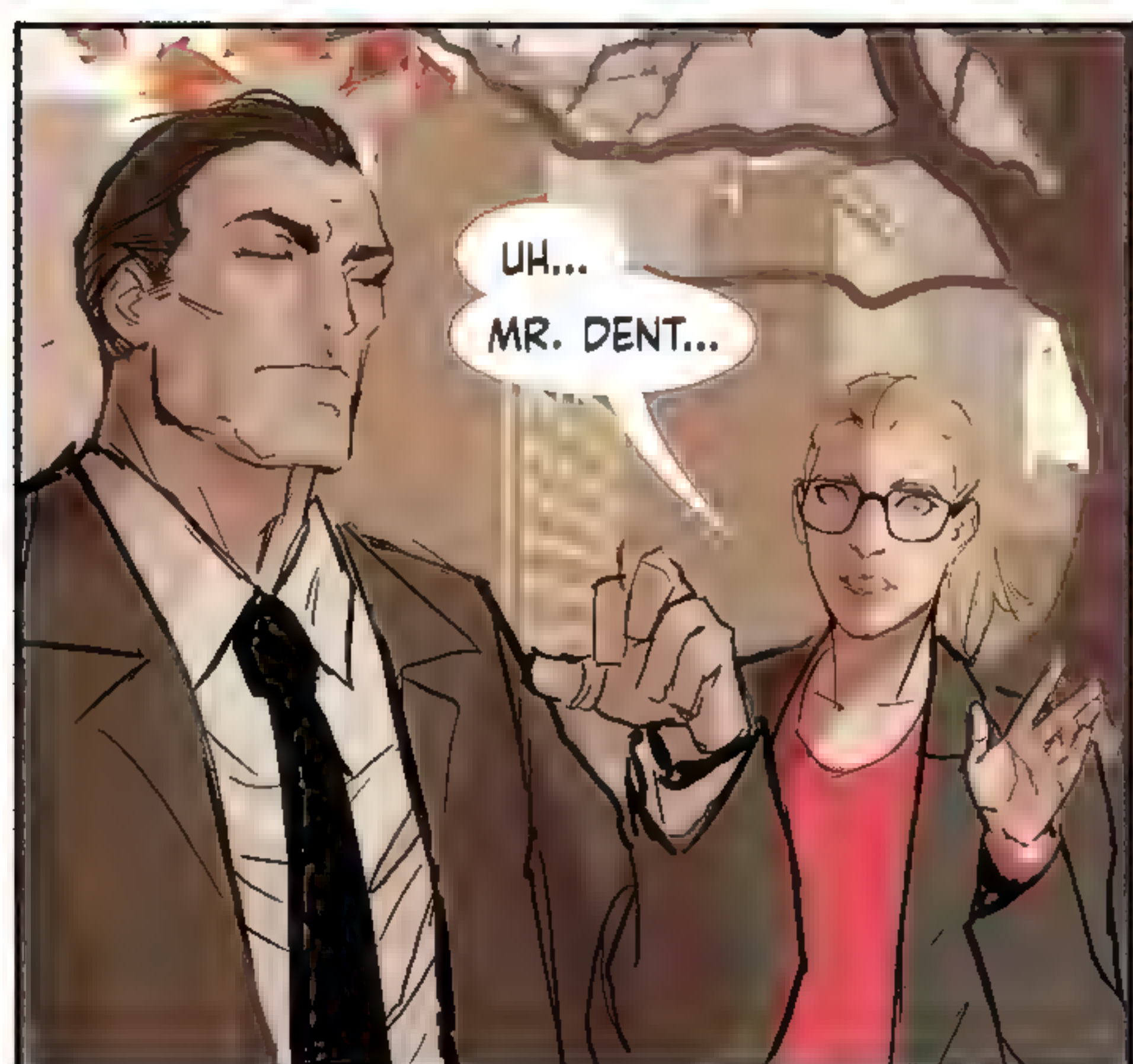
AH.



I LIKE TO COME HERE SOMETIMES, EARLY. BEFORE ANYONE ELSE IS AROUND...

SHE IS A BEAUTIFUL CITY IN THE MORNING, DON'T YOU THINK?

SUNLIGHT DISPERSES THE SHADOWS FROM HER ALLEYS AND ROOFTOPS, AND SHE IS JUST... *BEAUTIFUL*.



UH... MR. DENT...



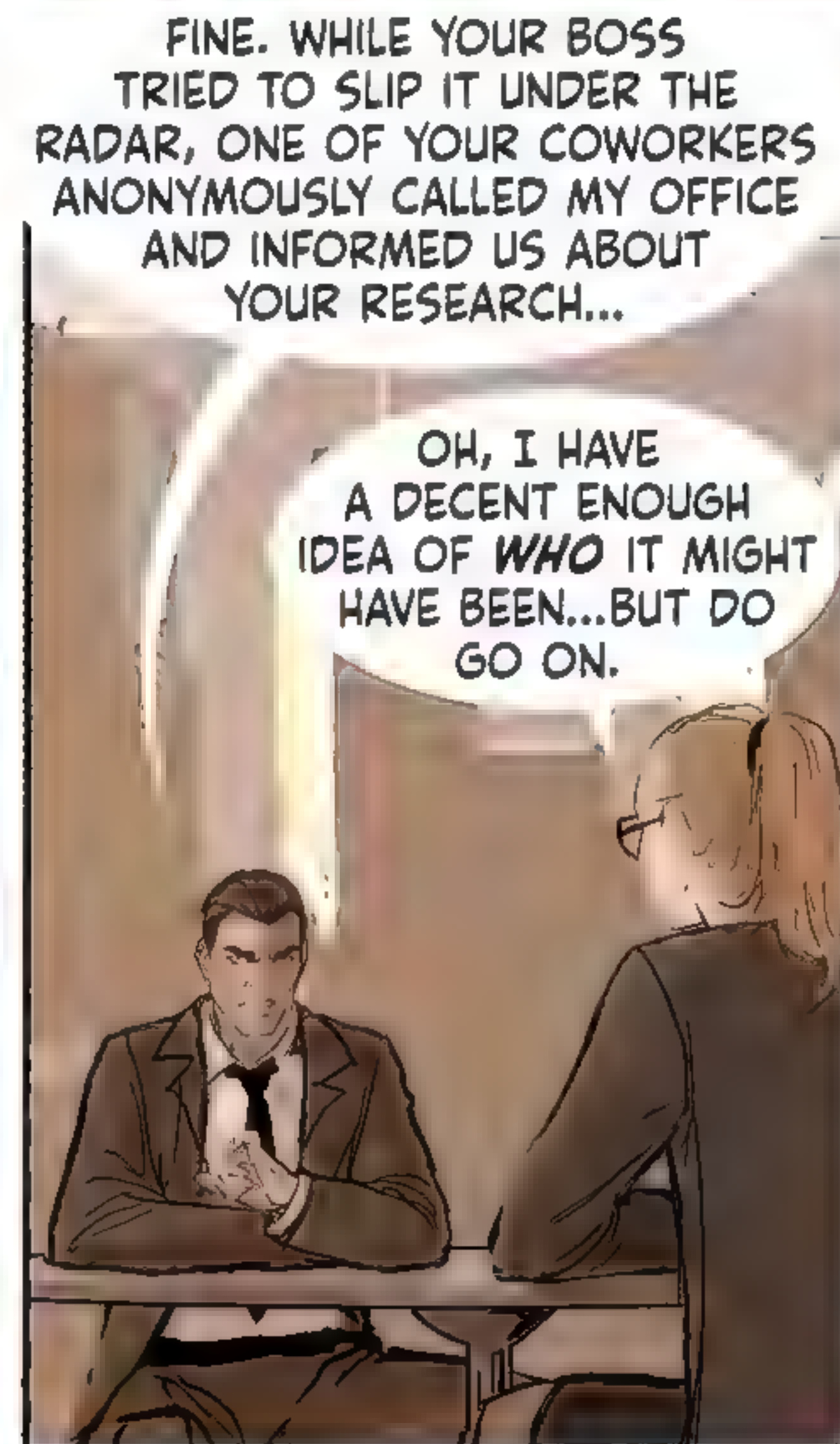
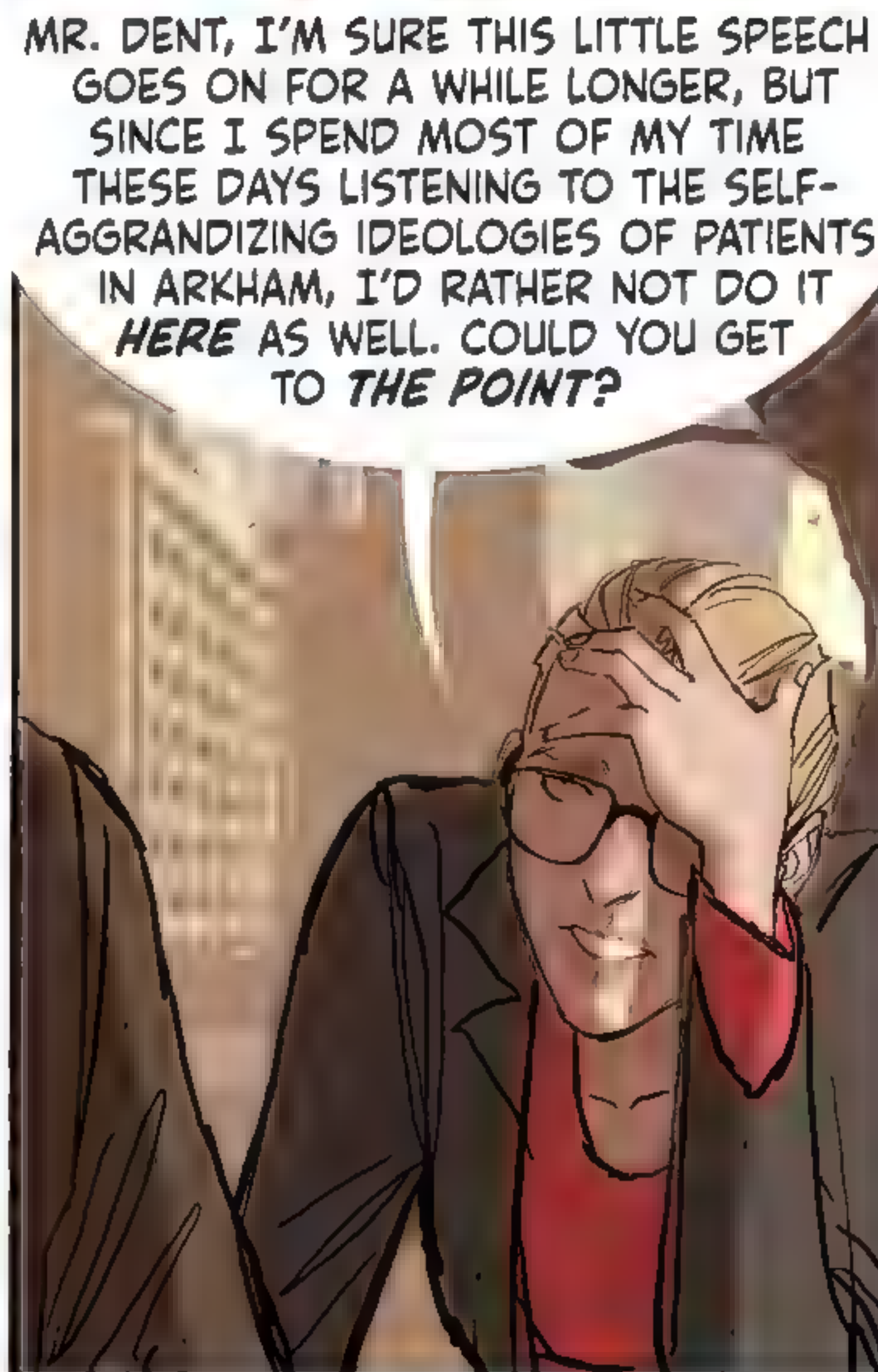
I WANT YOU TO REFUSE THE WAYNE GRANT.

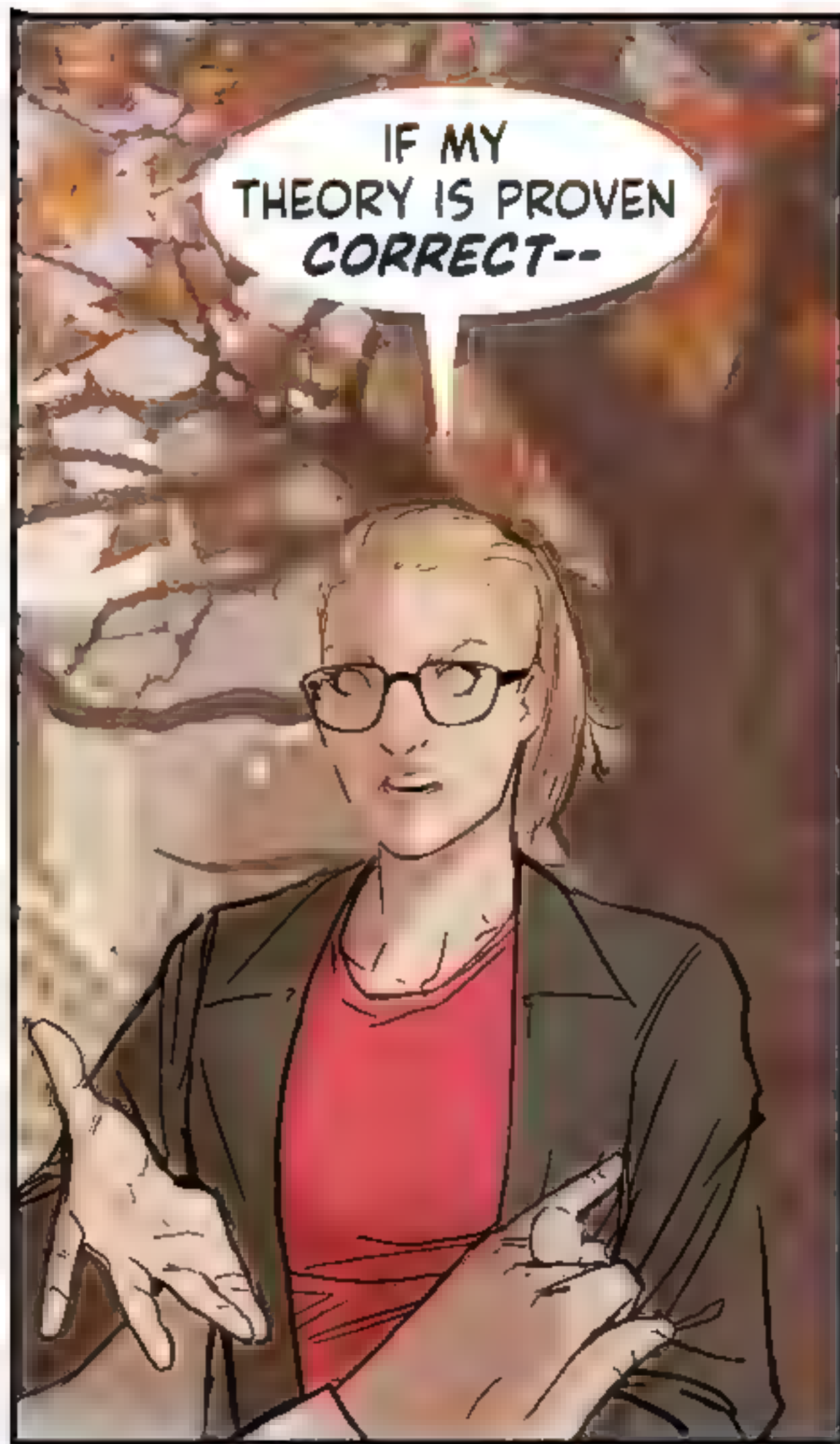
WHA--



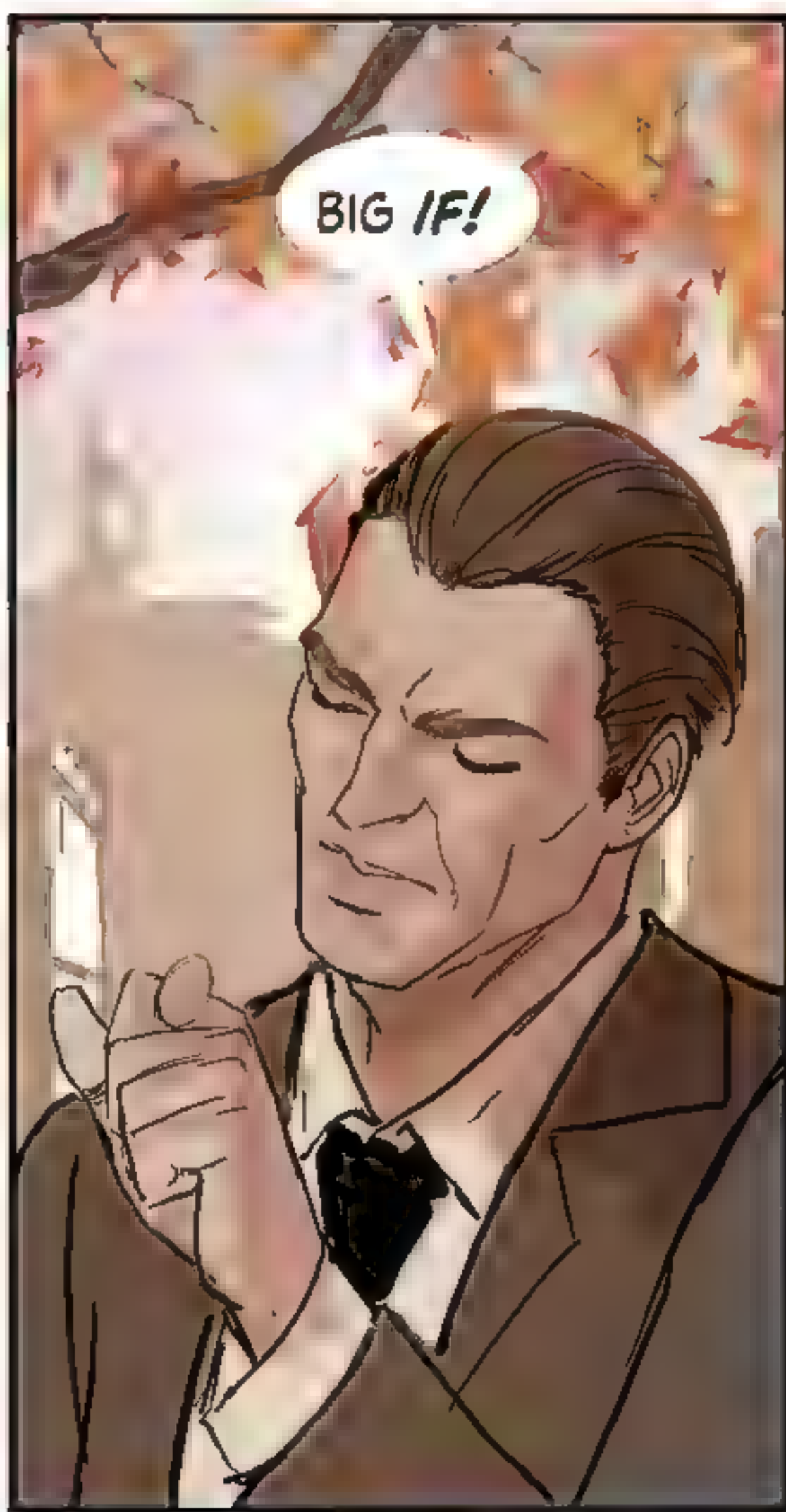
I'D ALSO LIKE YOU TO END YOUR RESEARCH.

EXCUSE YOU?!

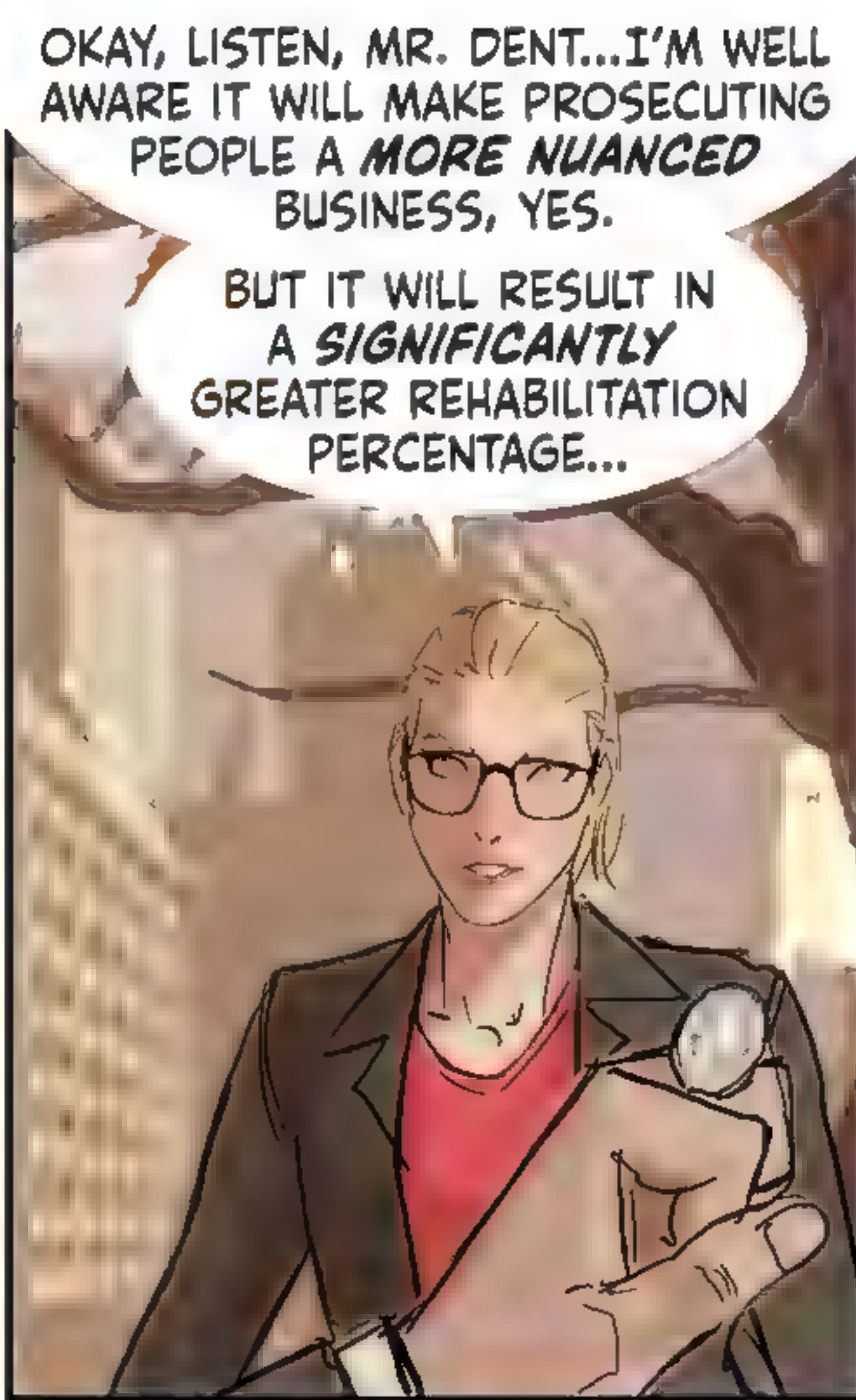




IF MY
THEORY IS PROVEN
CORRECT--

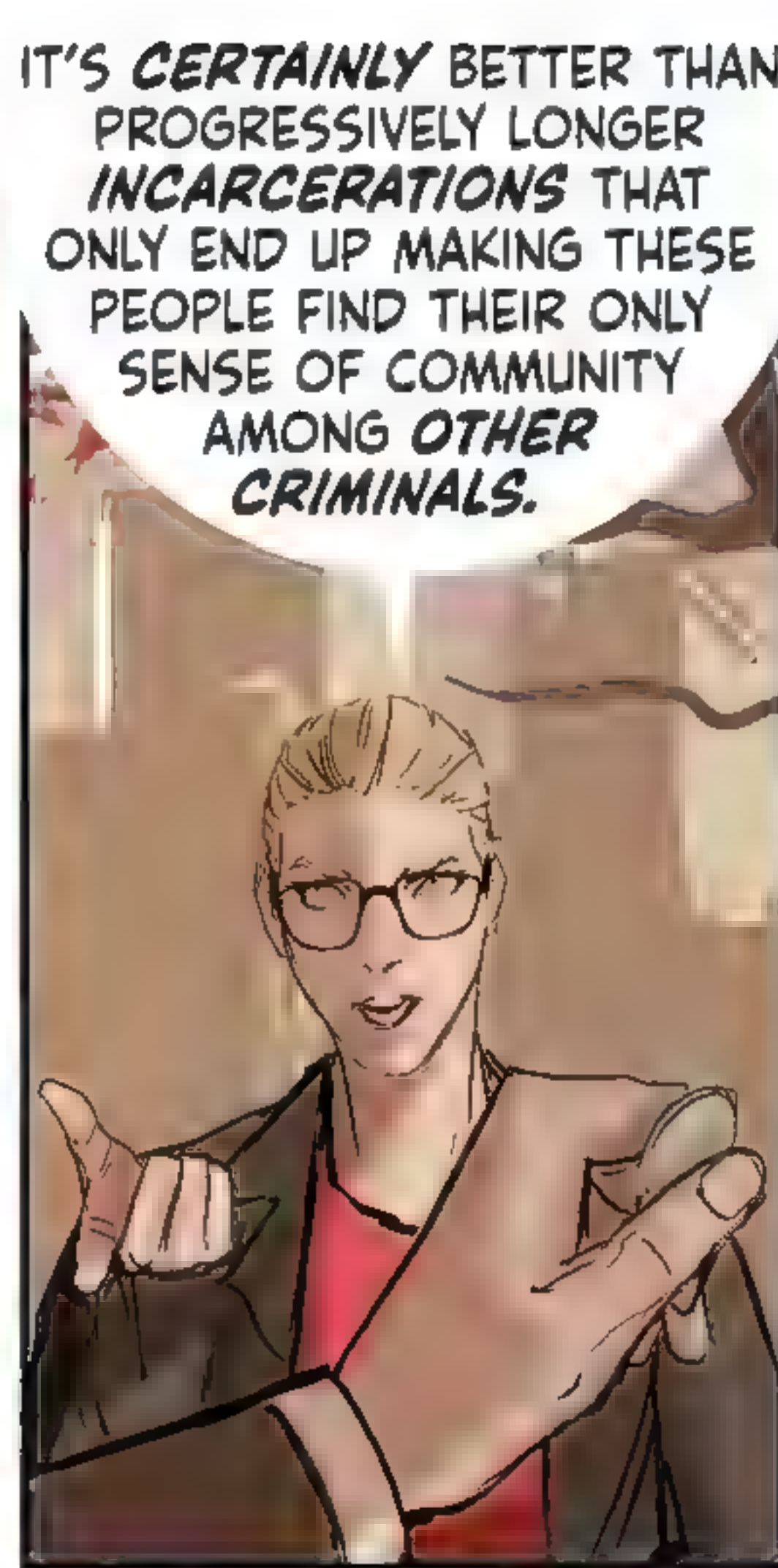


BIG IF!

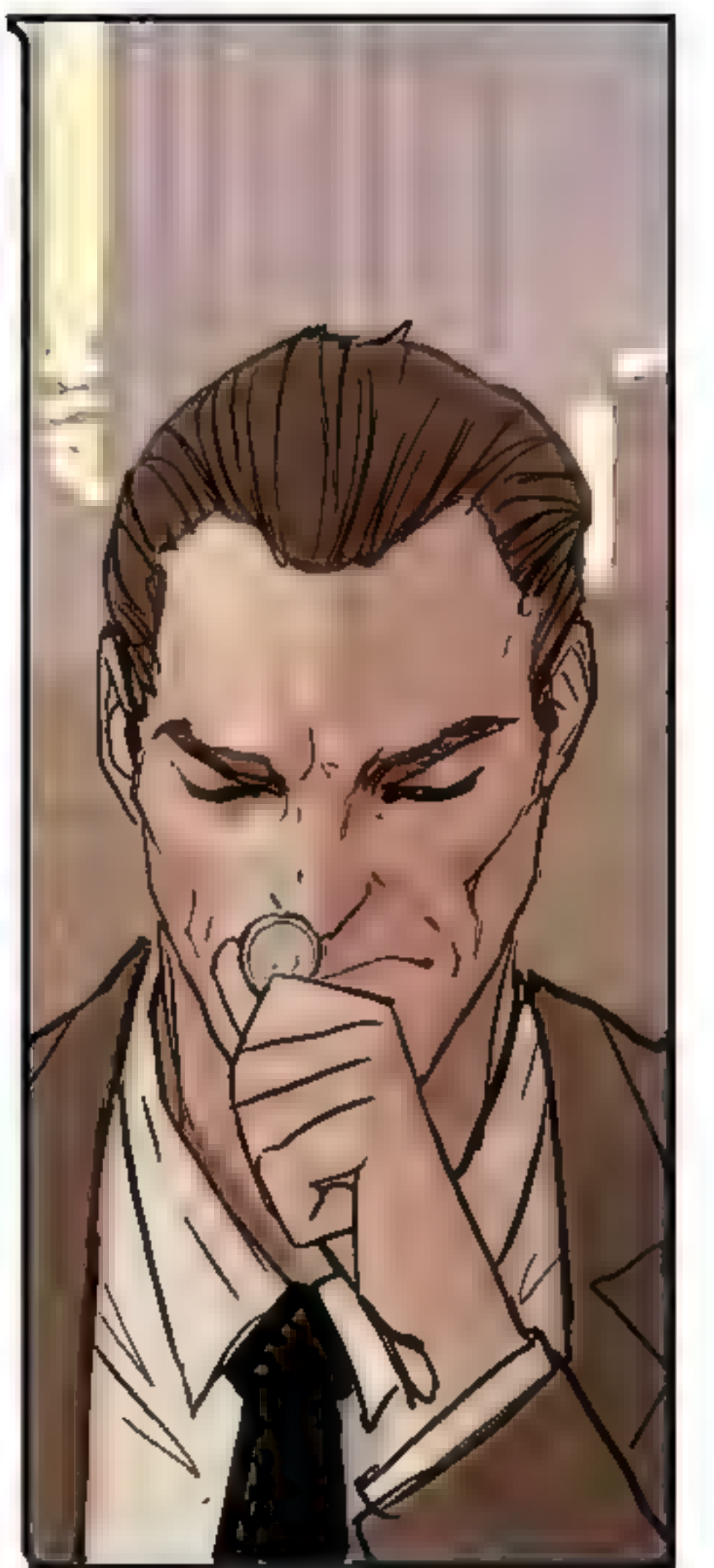


OKAY, LISTEN, MR. DENT...I'M WELL
AWARE IT WILL MAKE PROSECUTING
PEOPLE A **MORE NUANCED**
BUSINESS, YES.

BUT IT WILL RESULT IN
A **SIGNIFICANTLY**
GREATER REHABILITATION
PERCENTAGE...



IT'S **CERTAINLY** BETTER THAN
PROGRESSIVELY LONGER
INCARCERATIONS THAT
ONLY END UP MAKING THESE
PEOPLE FIND THEIR ONLY
SENSE OF COMMUNITY
AMONG **OTHER**
CRIMINALS.



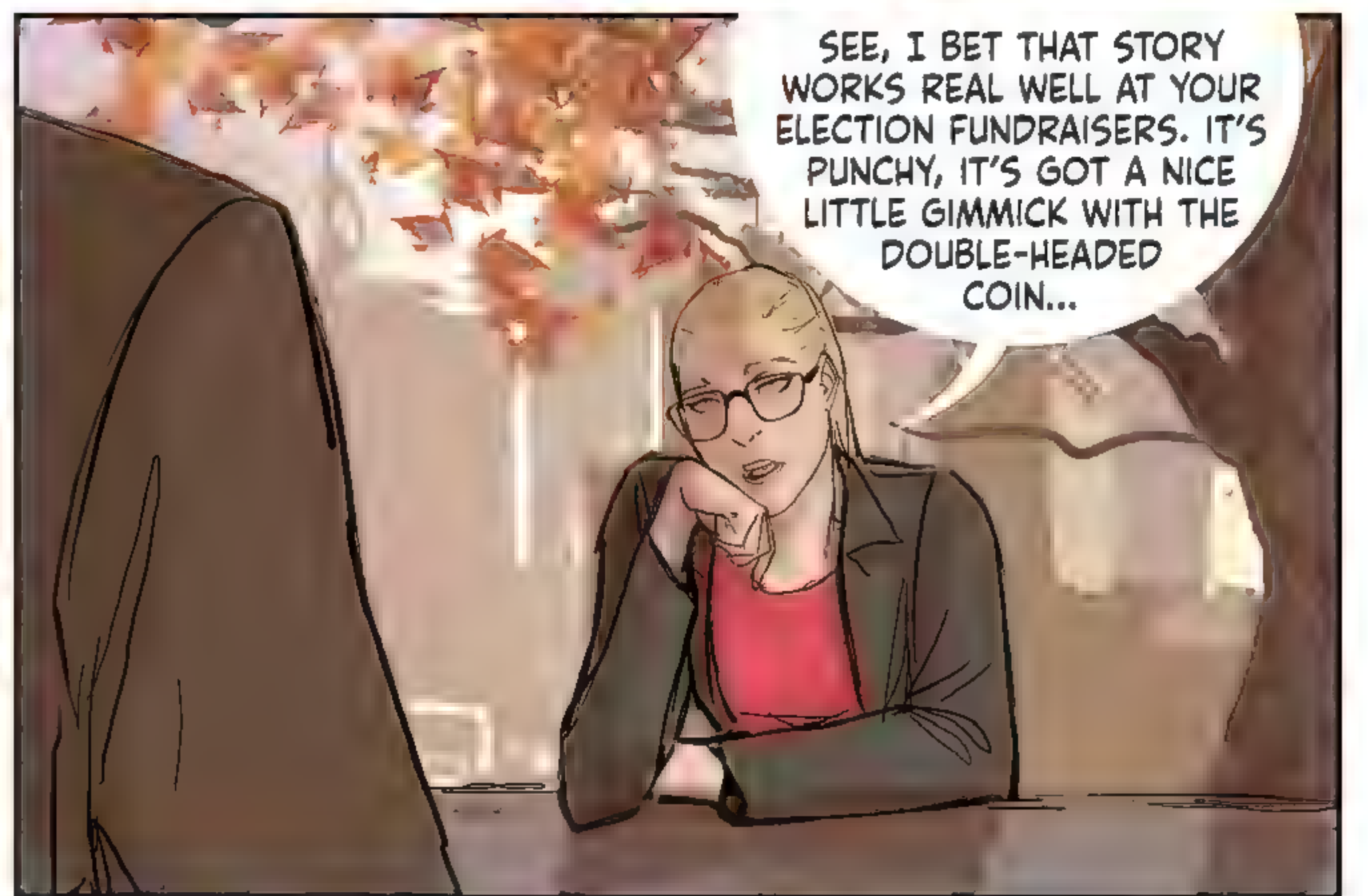
SEE THIS? IT'S A
DOUBLE-HEADED
COIN. HEADS ON
BOTH SIDES.

IT WAS GIVEN
TO ME BY A MOTHER
WHOSE DAUGHTER WAS
KILLED BY A PAROLED
CRIMINAL.

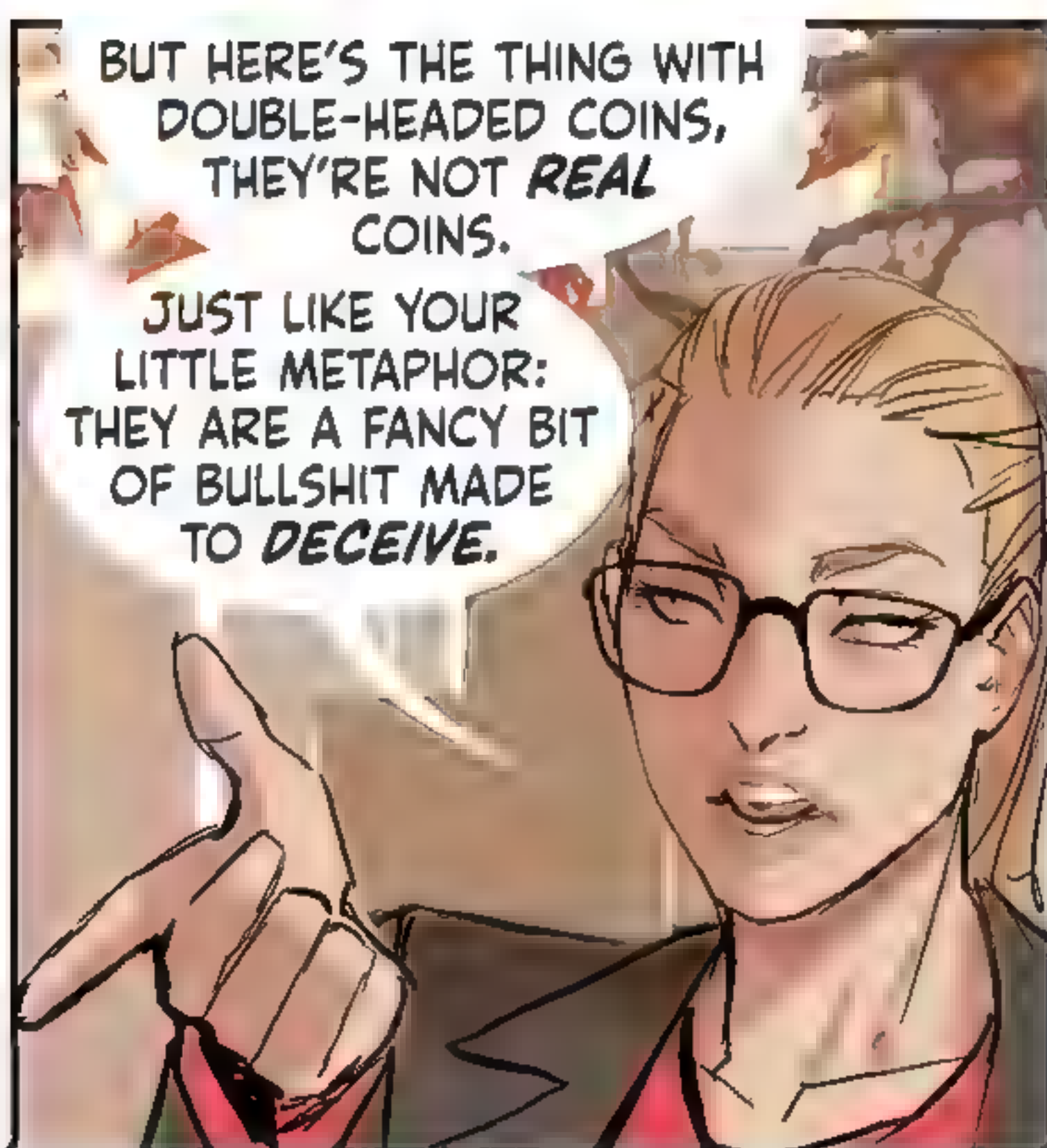
SHE SAID,
"YOU TAKE THIS,
MR. DENT. YOU
KEEP IT AS A
REMINDER.

"THESE **MONSTERS**
WILL TRY TO CONVINCE YOU
THEY **CHANGED** THEIR WAYS,
THAT THERE IS A **GOOD SIDE**
TO THEM, BUT THEY ARE
LIKE THIS COIN.

"THEY MAY SPIN
AND THEY MAY FLY, BUT
WHEN THEY LAND, THEY'LL ONLY
SHOW YOU MORE OF **THE SAME.**"



SEE, I BET THAT STORY
WORKS REAL WELL AT YOUR
ELECTION FUNDRAISERS. IT'S
PUNCHY, IT'S GOT A NICE
LITTLE GIMMICK WITH THE
DOUBLE-HEADED
COIN...



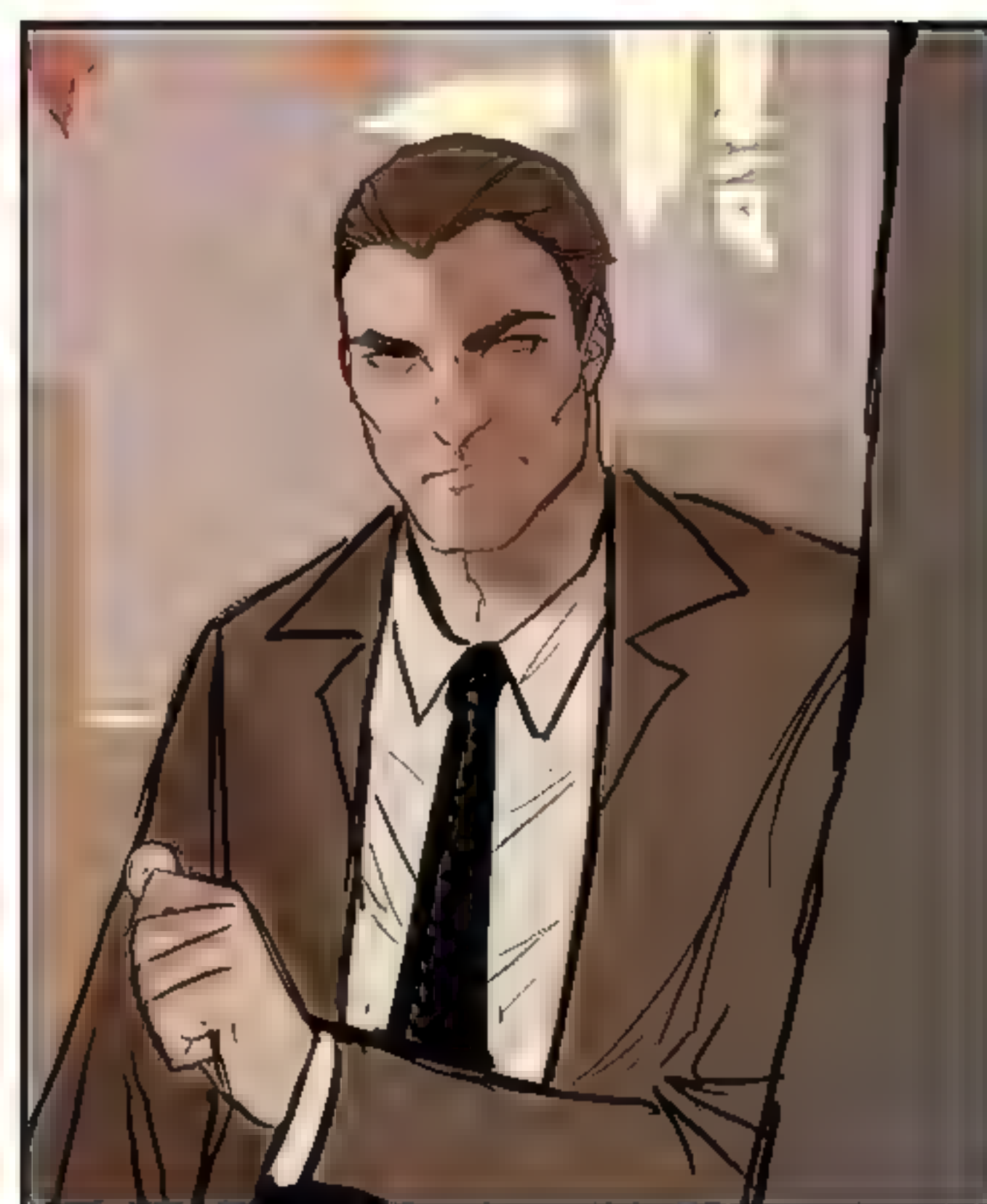
BUT HERE'S THE THING WITH
DOUBLE-HEADED COINS,
THEY'RE NOT **REAL**
COINS.

JUST LIKE YOUR
LITTLE METAPHOR:
THEY ARE A FANCY BIT
OF BULLSHIT MADE
TO **DECEIVE.**



GET YOURSELF A
REGULAR OLD COIN,
MR. DENT.

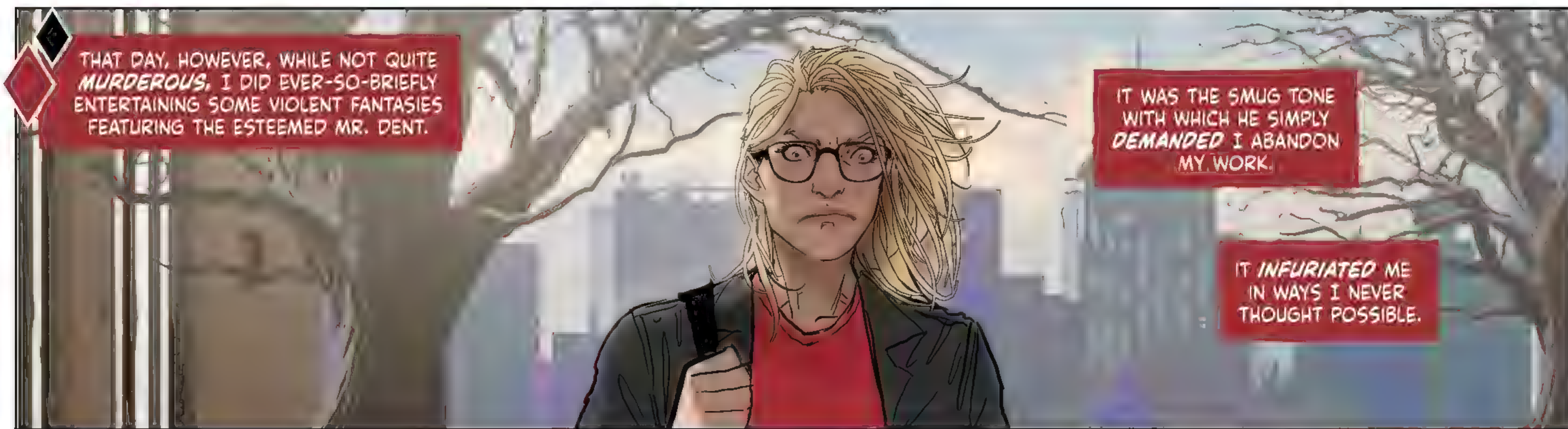
IT MAY MAKE
YOU SEE THE WORLD
DIFFERENTLY. OH, AND
I'M **NOT** BACKING
OFF.



IN FACT, I'M
JUST GETTING
STARTED.



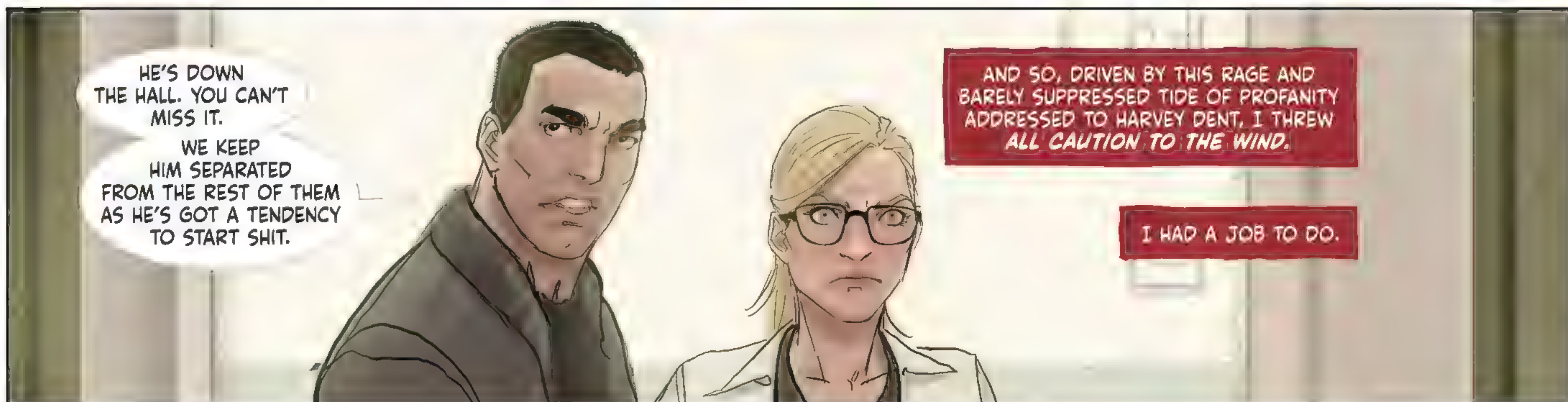
IT'S KINDA FUNNY...ALL OF OUR
BIG WORDS AND MORALIZING AND
YET WITHIN FIVE MONTHS WE WOULD
BOTH BECOME MURDERERS...



THAT DAY, HOWEVER, WHILE NOT QUITE **MURDEROUS**, I DID EVER-SO-BRIEFLY ENTERTAINING SOME VIOLENT FANTASIES FEATURING THE ESTEEMED MR. DENT.

IT WAS THE SMUG TONE WITH WHICH HE SIMPLY **DEMANDED** I ABANDON MY WORK.

IT **INFURIATED** ME IN WAYS I NEVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE.



HE'S DOWN THE HALL. YOU CAN'T MISS IT.

WE KEEP HIM SEPARATED FROM THE REST OF THEM AS HE'S GOT A TENDENCY TO START SHIT.

AND SO, DRIVEN BY THIS RAGE AND BARELY SUPPRESSED TIDE OF PROFANITY ADDRESSED TO HARVEY DENT, I THREW **ALL CAUTION TO THE WIND**.

I HAD A JOB TO DO.

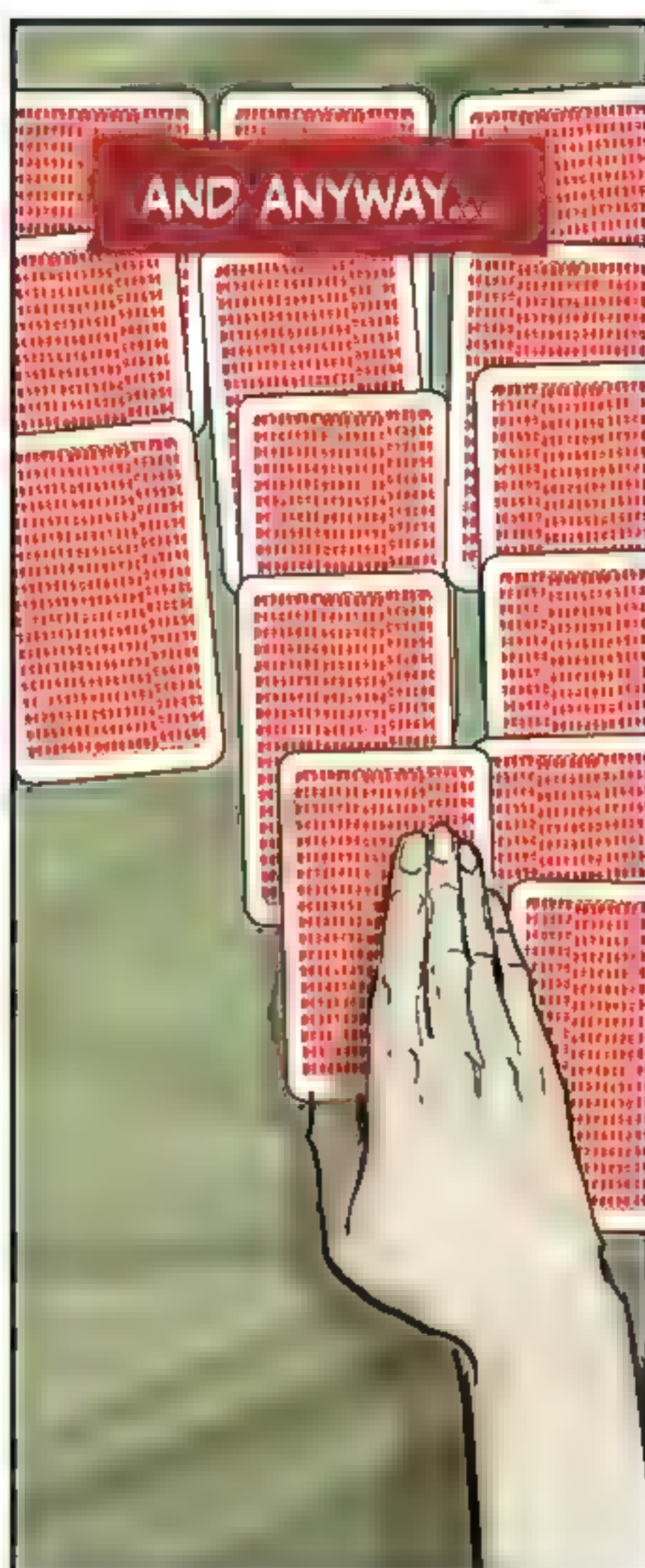
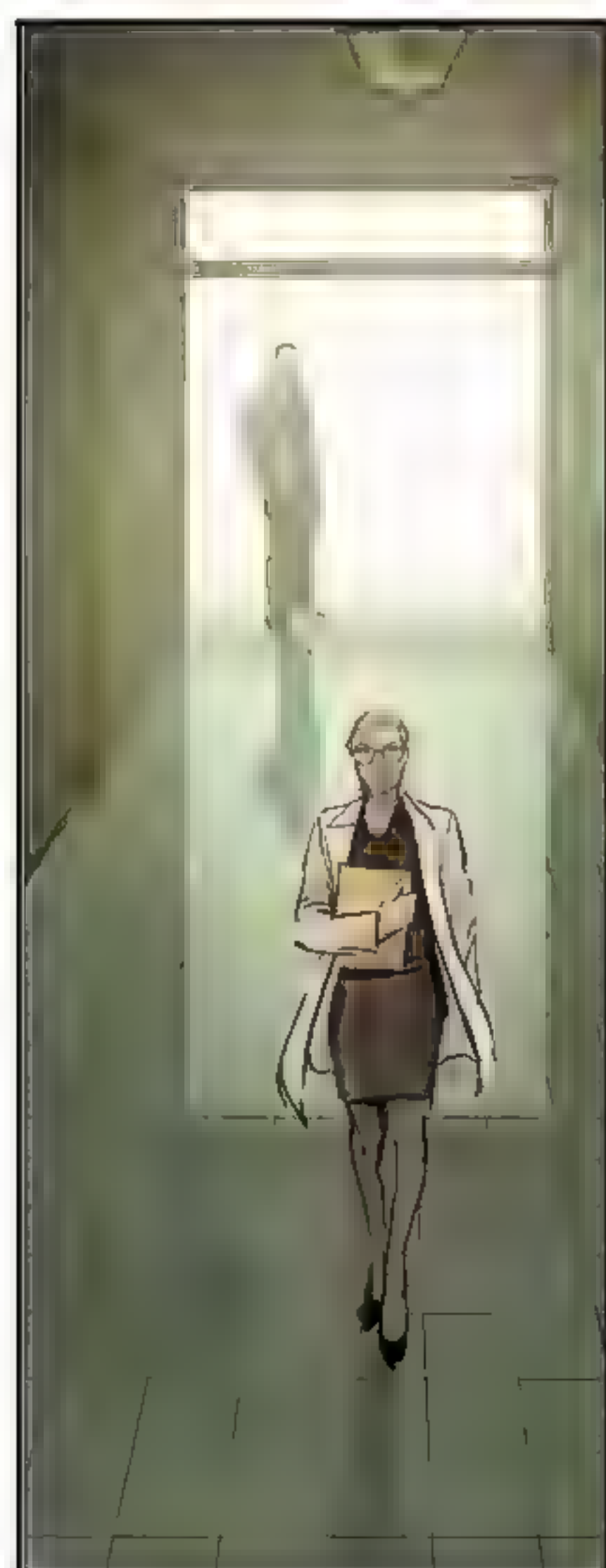


I MEAN, FOR ALL I KNEW HE COULD BE **THE ONE...**

THE PERFECT CANDIDATE FOR MY STUDY.

CALL IF YOU NEED ME.

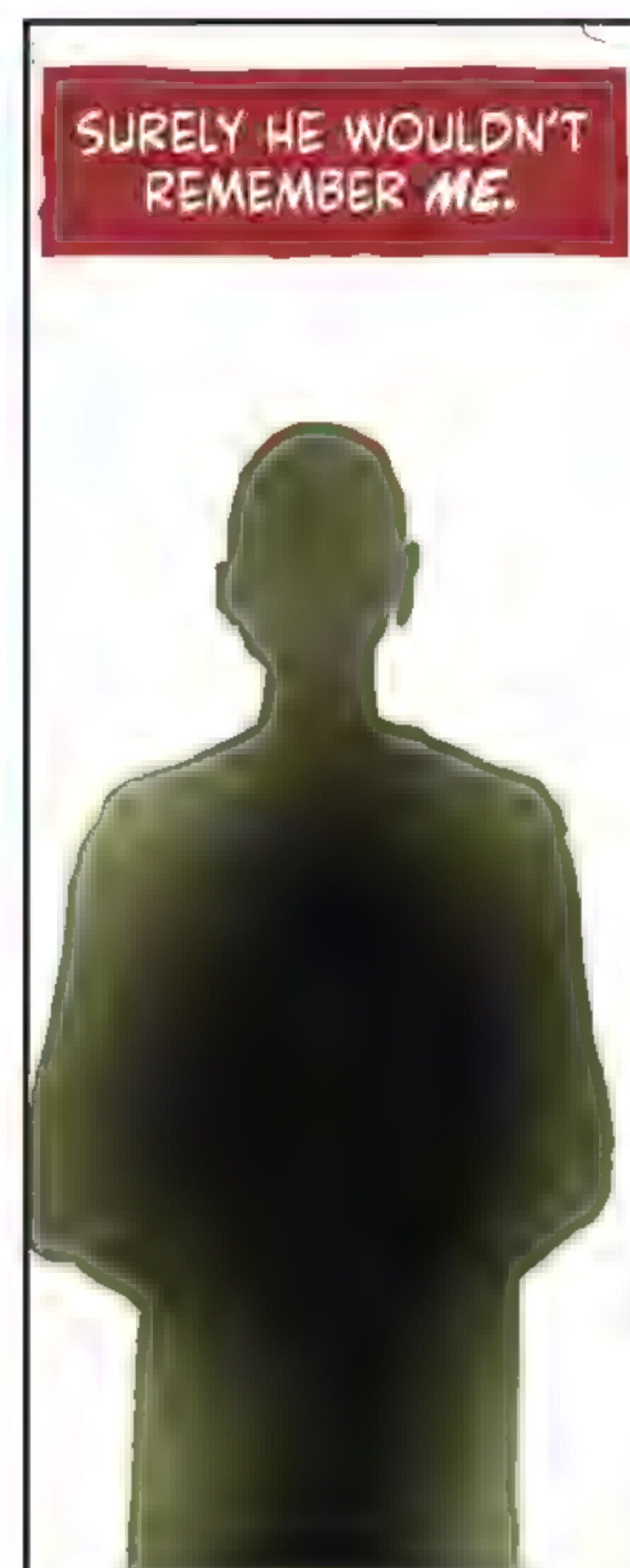
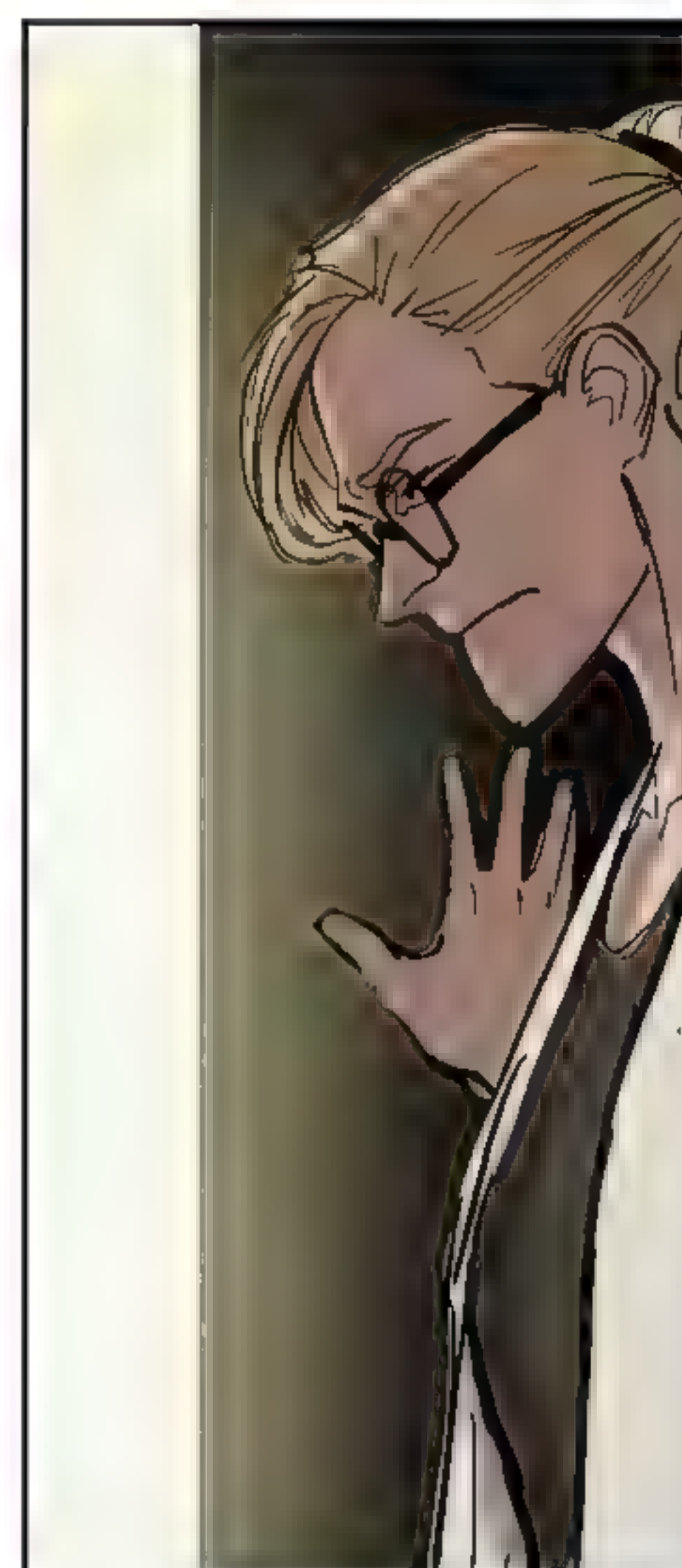
THANK YOU, MR. BRONSON.



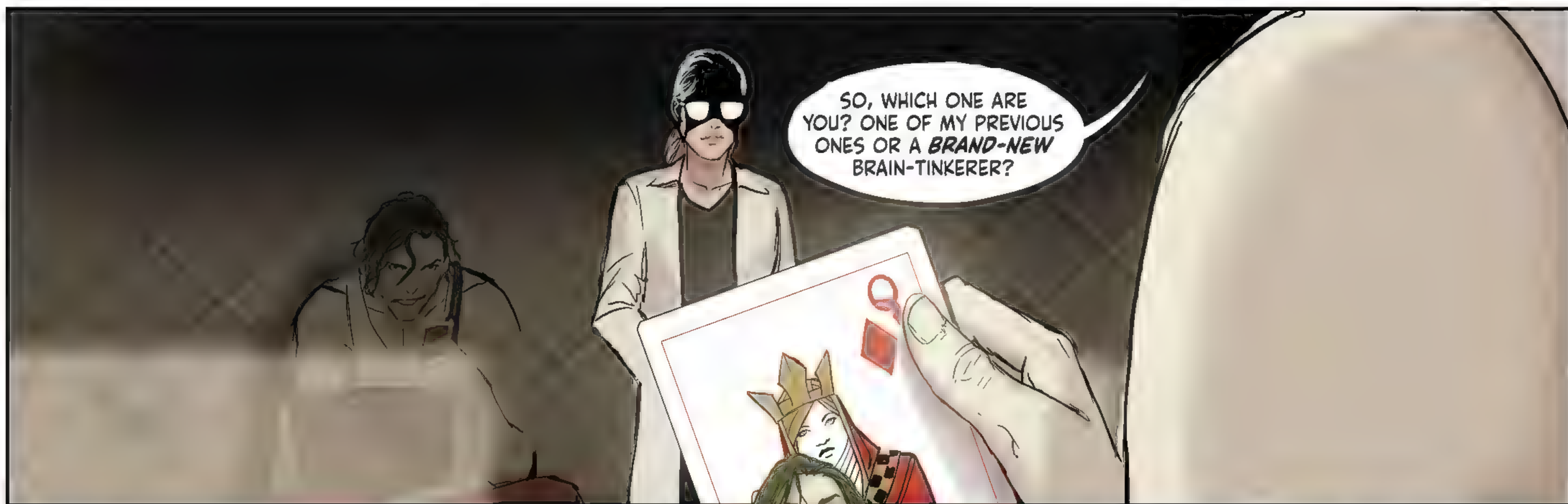
AND ANYWAY...

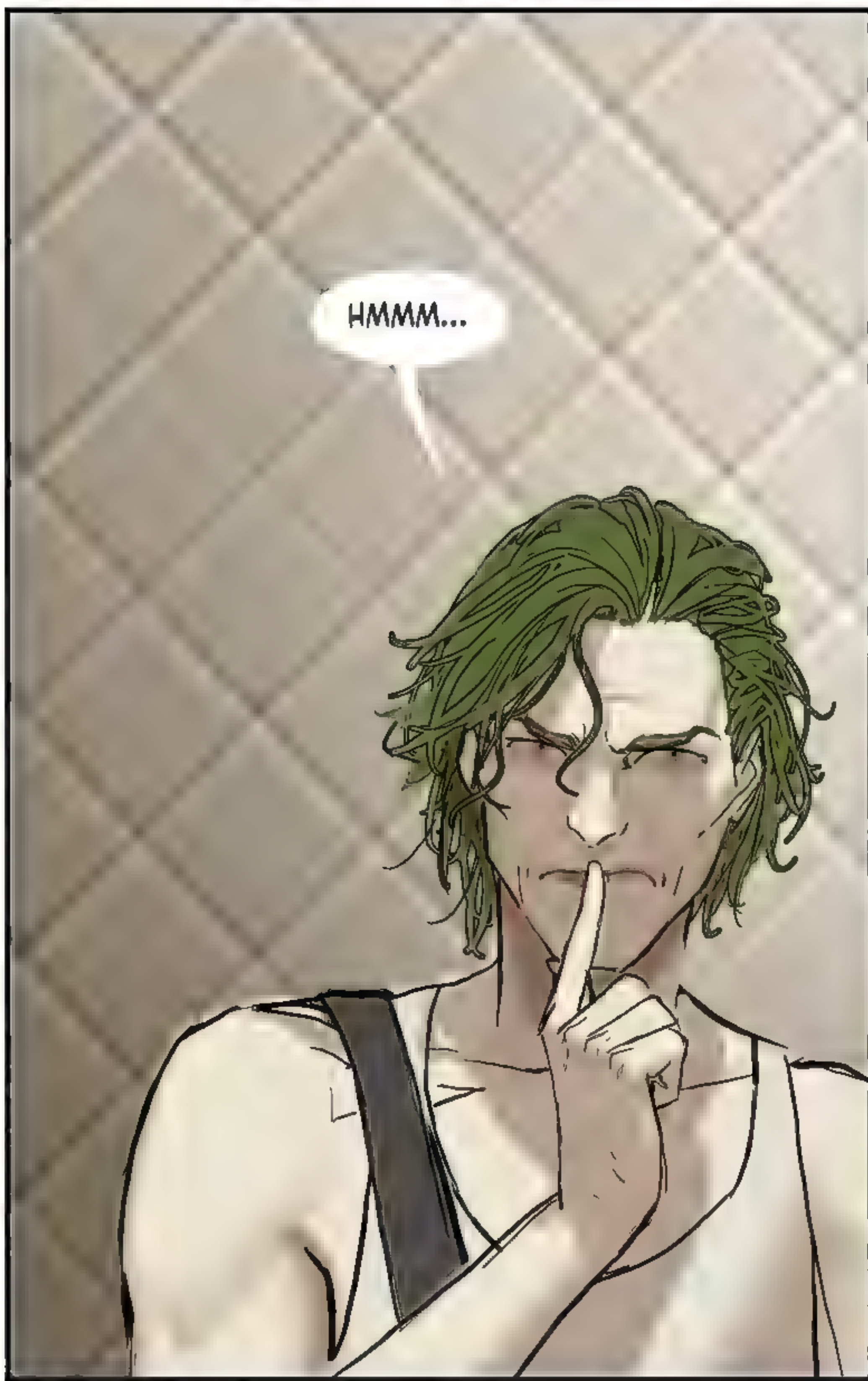


IT'D BEEN OVER A MONTH.



SURELY HE WOULDN'T REMEMBER **ME**.





HMMM...

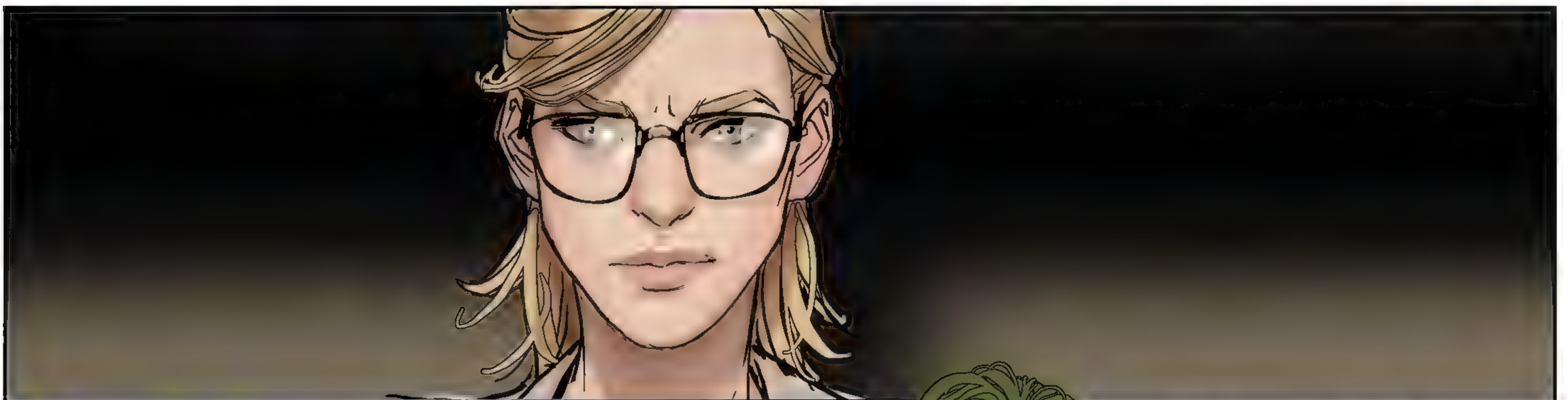


YOU KNOW...

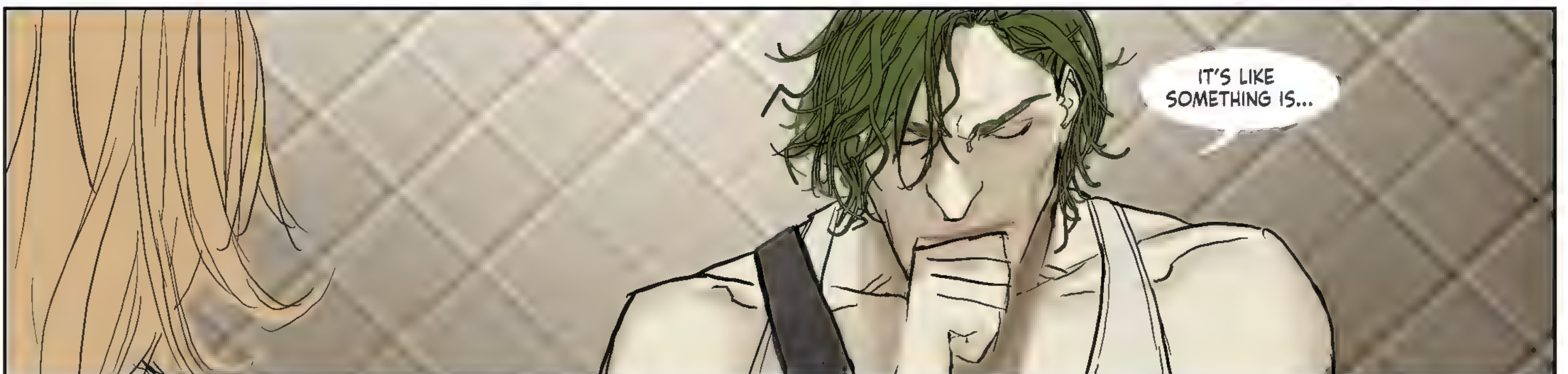
FUNNY THING
ABOUT GETTING YOUR
HEAD SLAMMED INTO A
WALL REPEATEDLY...

IT DOES A
NUMBER ON YOUR
MEMORY...

THEN AGAIN,
ELECTROSHOCK
THERAPY PROBABLY
HASN'T DONE MUCH TO
HELP WITH THAT
EITHER...

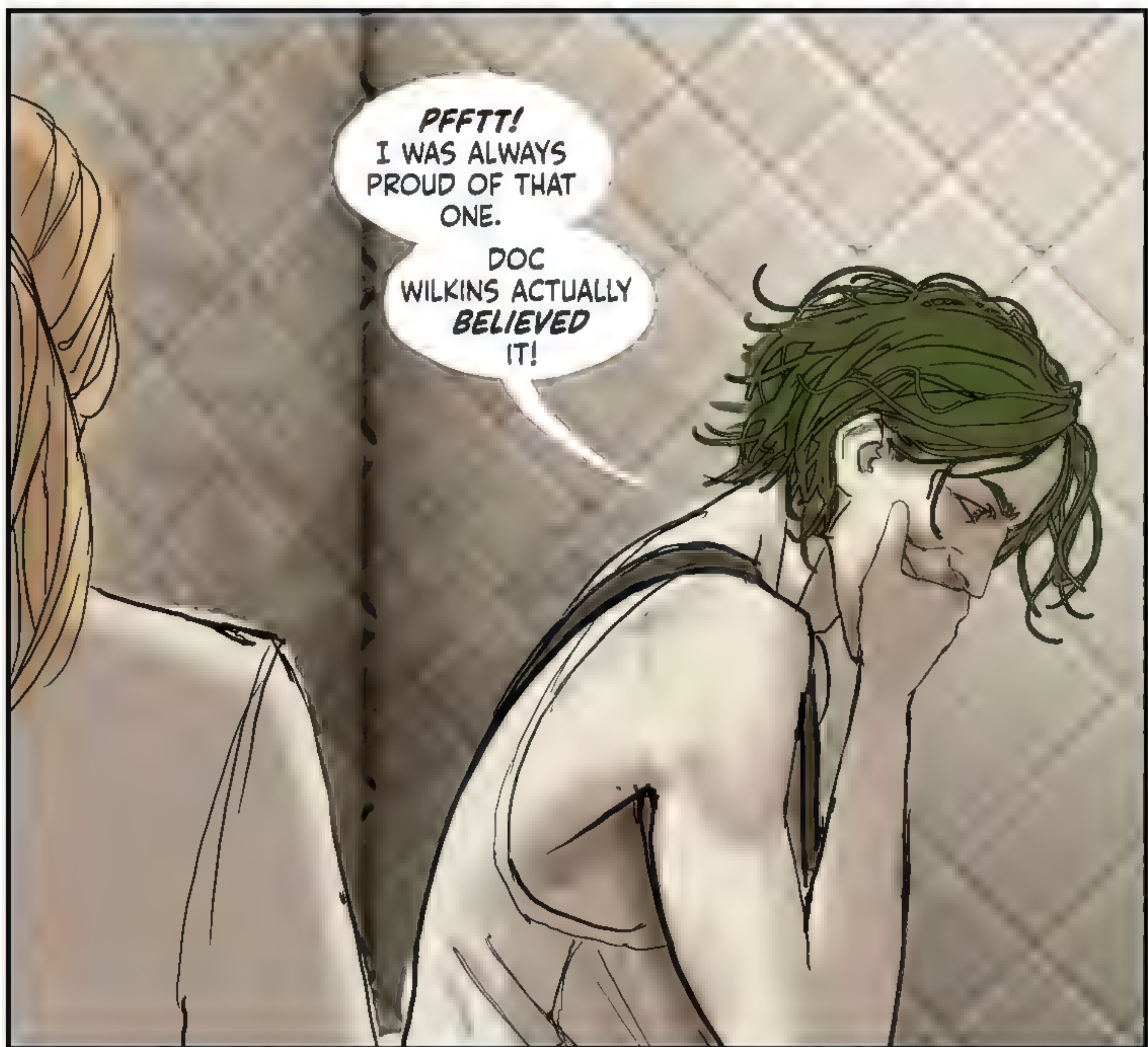


WHAT
I MEAN IS,
YOU **LOOK** LIKE
SOMEONE I'VE
MET...BUT...NOT
ENTIRELY!



IT'S LIKE
SOMETHING IS...

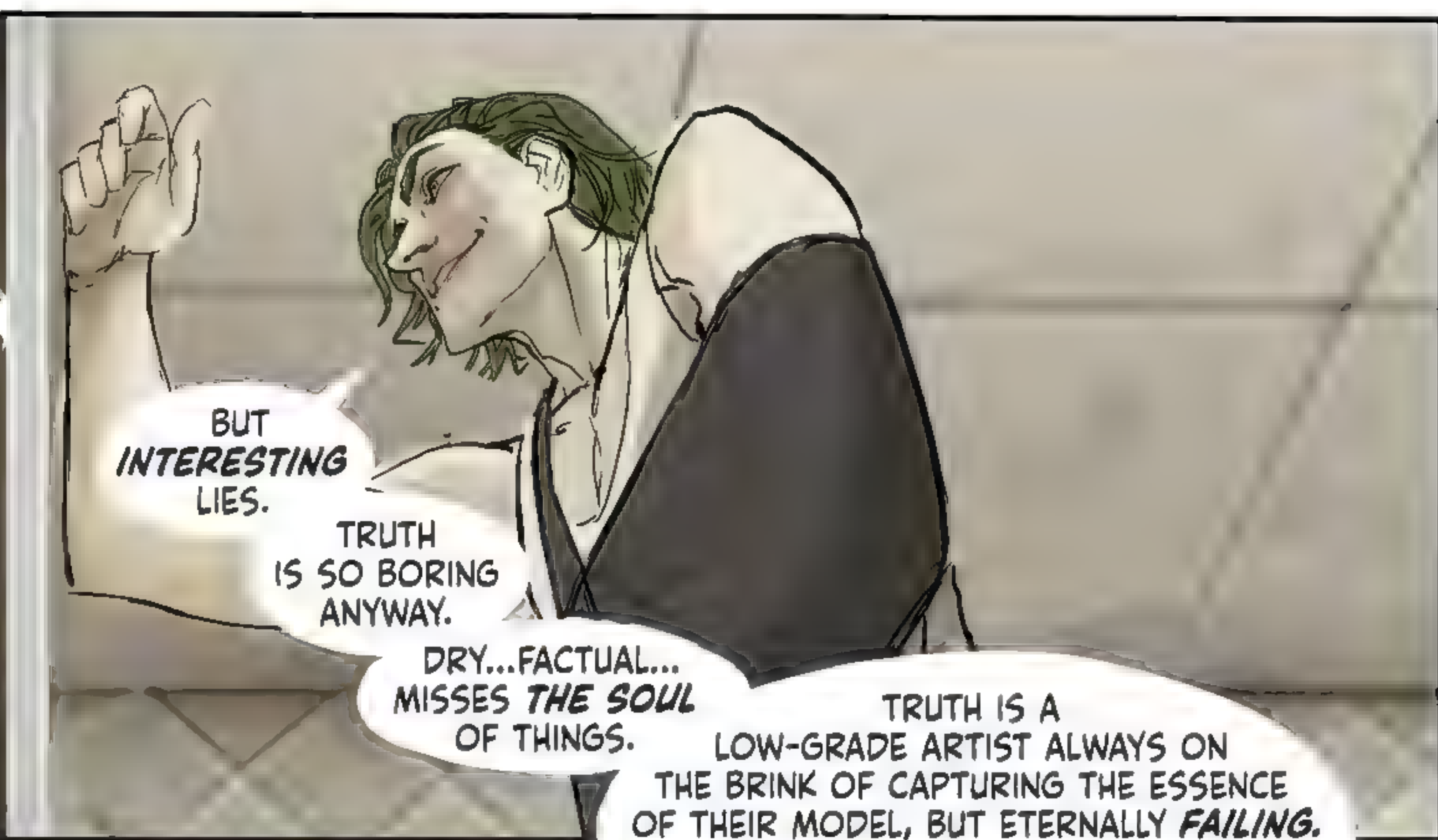






LIES.

PERHAPS.

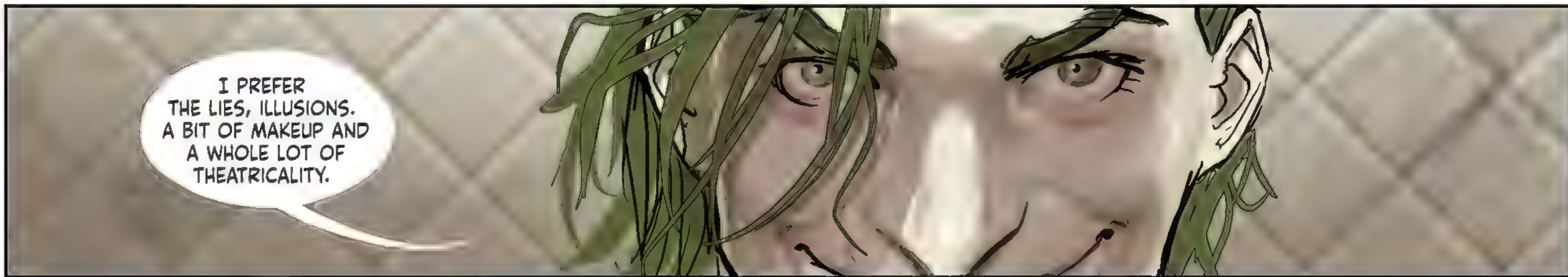


BUT
INTERESTING
LIES.

TRUTH
IS SO BORING
ANYWAY.

DRY...FACTUAL...
MISSES *THE SOUL*
OF THINGS.

TRUTH IS A
LOW-GRADE ARTIST ALWAYS ON
THE BRINK OF CAPTURING THE ESSENCE
OF THEIR MODEL, BUT ETERNALLY *FAILING*.



I PREFER
THE LIES, ILLUSIONS.
A BIT OF MAKEUP AND
A WHOLE LOT OF
THEATRICALITY.



STORIES,
THEN.



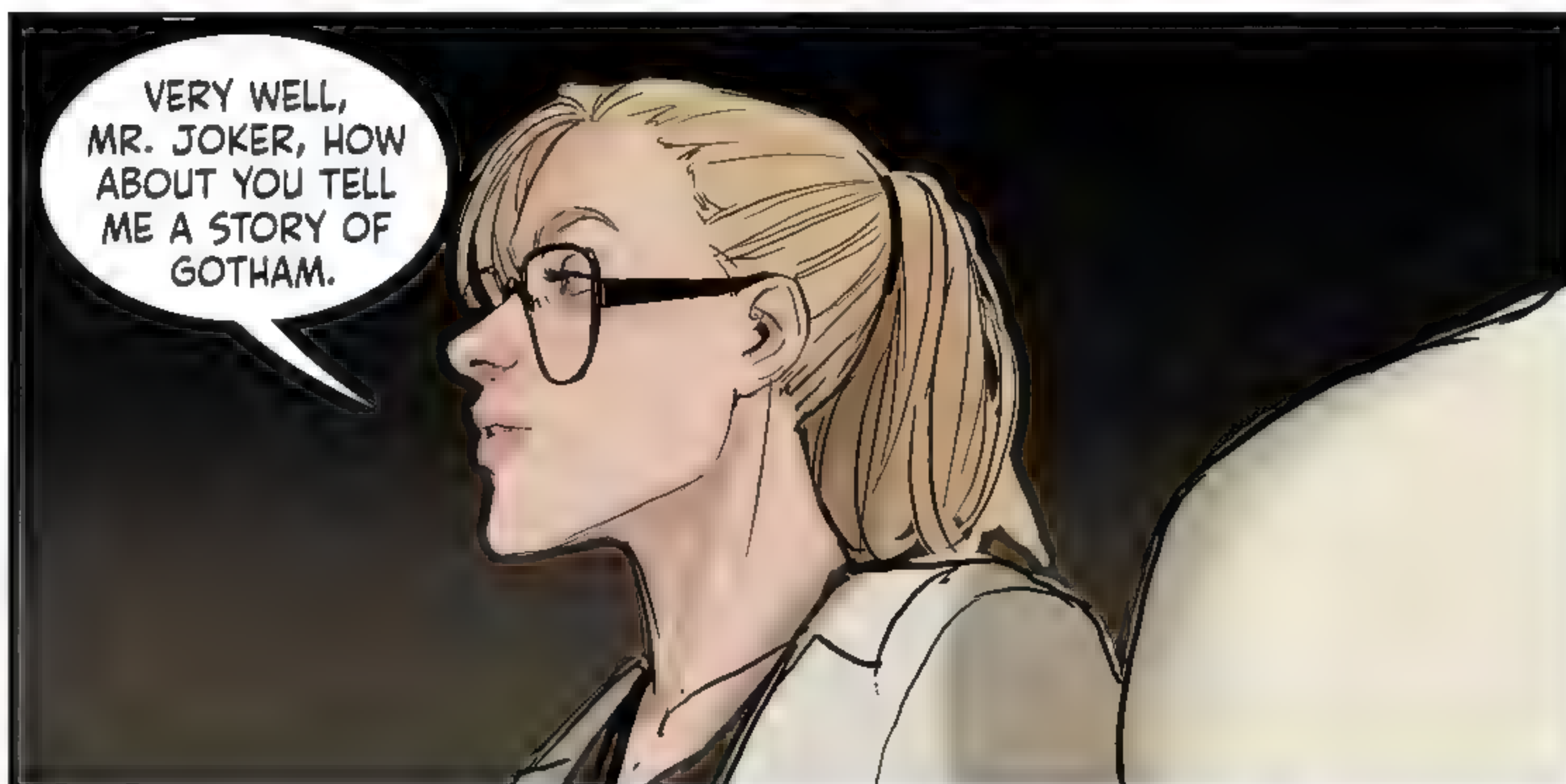
MONSTER
STORIES?



I'M
INTERESTED
IN THOSE.



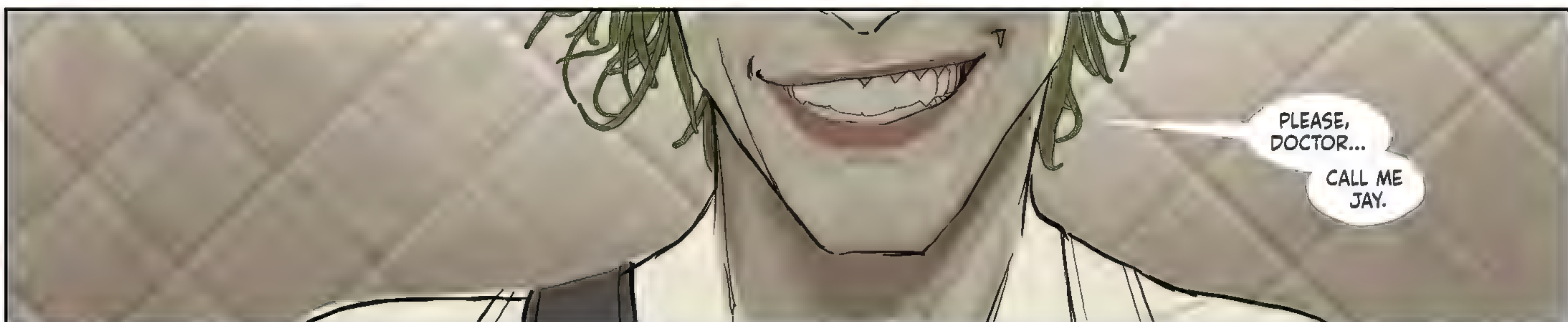
YOU'RE
IN THE RIGHT
PLACE.



VERY WELL,
MR. JOKER, HOW
ABOUT YOU TELL
ME A STORY OF
GOTHAM.



CITY OF
MONSTERS.



PLEASE,
DOCTOR...

CALL ME
JAY.

I REMEMBER THINKING,
*THIS IS FINE. I CAN
CONTROL THIS SITUATION.*

IT WAS NEITHER THE FIRST
NOR THE LAST TIME I WAS
WRONG ABOUT THAT.

VERY WELL,
MR. JAY.







BOOK TWO



IT STARTS WITH
FANTASIES, DOCTOR--
THAT WISHFUL THINKING THAT
MAKES YOUR MUSCLES **TWITCH**
AS YOU IMAGINE WRAPPING YOUR
HANDS AROUND YOUR
ENEMY'S **NECK**.

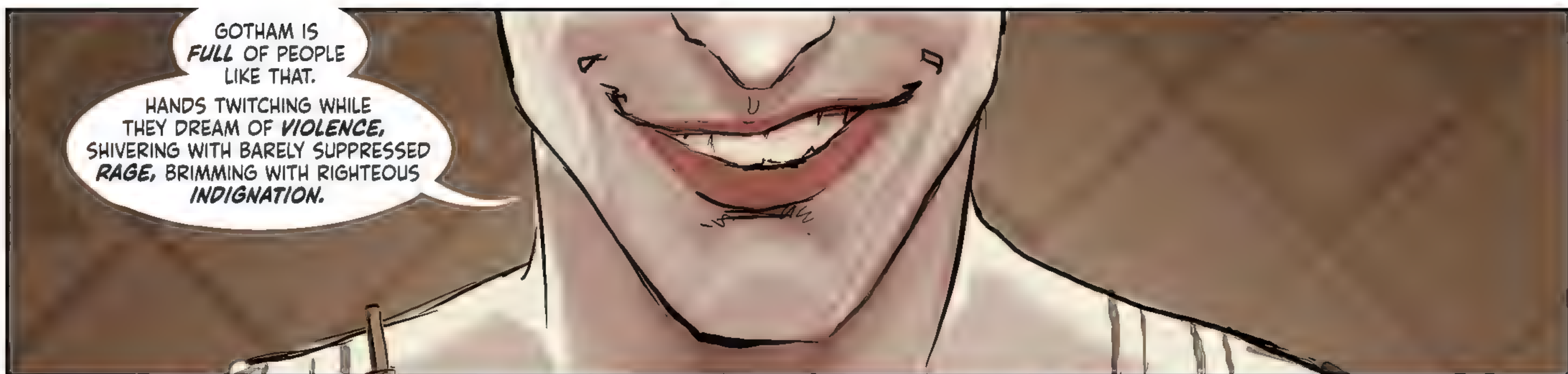
I DON'T
HAVE ENEMIES, **MR.**
JAY.

SURE YOU DO!
EVERYONE DOES! THOSE
PEOPLE YOU MEET AND THINK,
WOULDN'T THINGS BE SO
MUCH BETTER IF THEY
WERE DEAD?

THOSE
PEOPLE WHOSE
VERY PRESENCE
TURNS THINGS
SOUR.

WE ALL KNOW
THEM. AND IT STARTS
WITH THEM. THEY ARE THE
FIRST ONES TO **TEST**
YOU.

WHAT DOES
THAT HAVE TO DO
WITH **GOTHAM**
CITY?



GOTHAM IS
FULL OF PEOPLE
LIKE THAT.
HANDS TWITCHING WHILE
THEY DREAM OF *VIOLENCE*,
SHIVERING WITH BARELY SUPPRESSED
RAGE, BRIMMING WITH RIGHTEOUS
INDIGNATION.



"SMILING POLITELY
AS THEY IMAGINE
SAVAGE THINGS."



"EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM
A *BOMB* THAT NEEDS BUT A
SINGLE SPARK TO SET IT OFF."

"AND THEN...WELL, THAT'S
WHEN THINGS GET *FUN*."

ALL RIGHT,
EVERYONE ACT LIKE A
DRUNKEN PILOT AND *HIT
THE FLOOR!*





AFTER ALL,
GOTHAM'S A CITY
WHERE ANGELS FLY
ON WINGS OF
ICARUS...

UP, UP
THEY GO AND
THEN...

...DOWN,

DOWN,

DOWN

THEY FALL.

UNTIL WE
ALL STAND REVEALED
FOR WHO WE TRULY
ARE

UNDERNEATH.

DON'T!

TOUCH!

MY!

PIPOO IN!!

LATER IN LIFE, IN DARK TIMES,
MY MIND WOULD GO BACK TO
THIS CONVERSATION.

SO ALL THE GOOD PEOPLE
ARE JUST **MONSTERS**
IN HIDING?

UNTIL THE
RUBBER BANDS OF
THEIR MASKS
SNAP.

I
MEAN...
ALL THE **NORMAL**
PEOPLE DREAM OF GOING
CRAZY EVERY NOW AND
THEN...PROBLEM IS, WHEN
THEY DO, THERE'S **NO**
GOING BACK.

AND WHAT
DO **YOU** DREAM
OF?

OH...SIMPLE
STUFF...HONEST
SMILES...
ANYHOW, I'M
A BIT TIRED, MAYBE
WE CAN CONTINUE
THIS LATER.

SURE, MR.
JAY...SEE YOU
SOON.

YOU
KNOW WHERE
TO FIND ME.

I'D DWELL ON THE SMALL DETAILS
OF WHAT HE'D SAID, WONDERING IF
THEY CARRIED LARGER MEANINGS...

BUT NOT THAT DAY.

THAT DAY I
WAS **PISSED.**

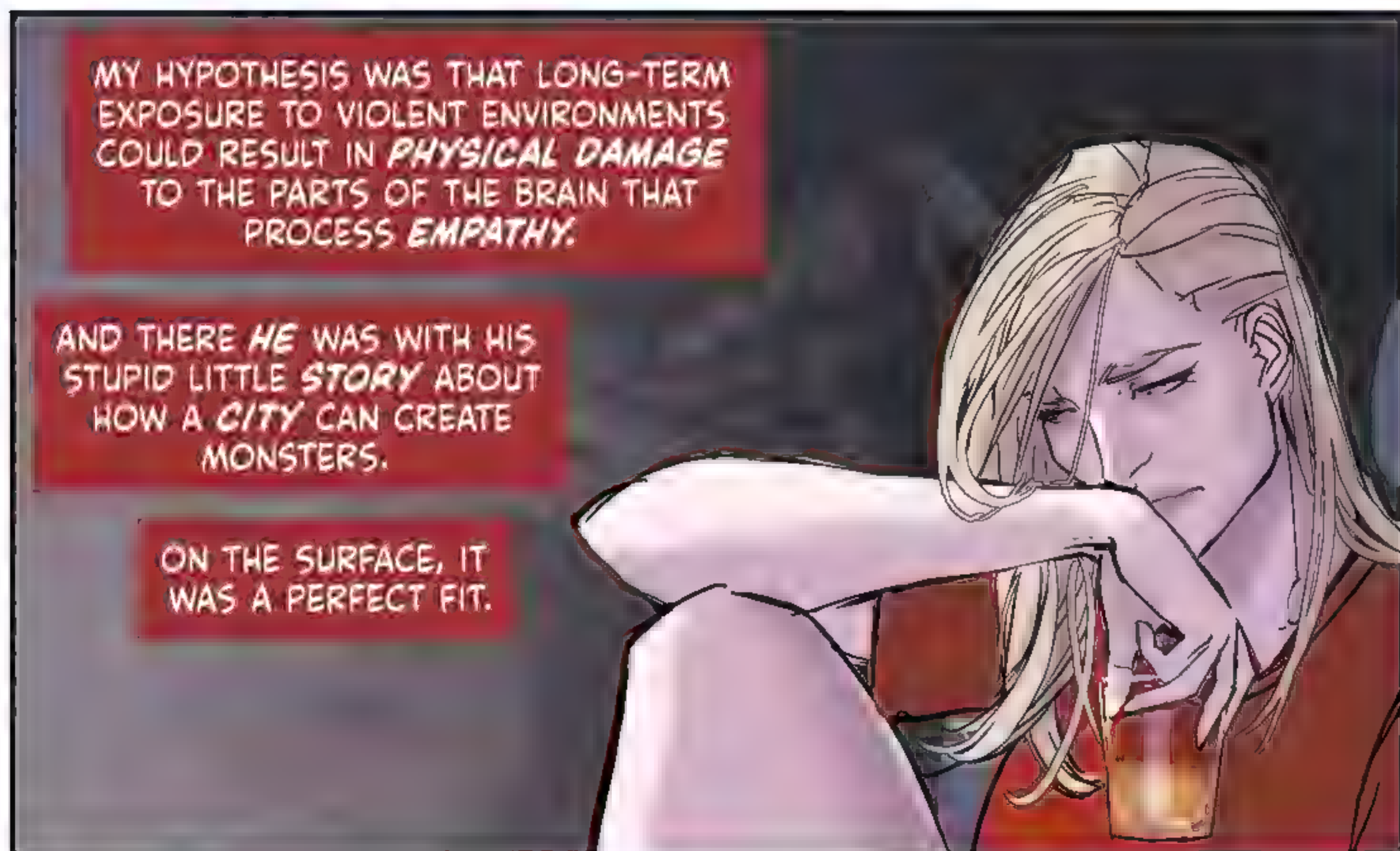
IT FELT LIKE SOME SAD RETELLING OF
THE STANFORD PRISON EXPERIMENT,
WRAPPED IN ANECDOTAL NONSENSE--
THE SORT OF **GARBAGE** HE'D FED
HIS PREVIOUS THERAPISTS.

IT WAS **DOWNRIGHT**
OFFENSIVE.



IT WAS SO DAMNED
INFURIATING...

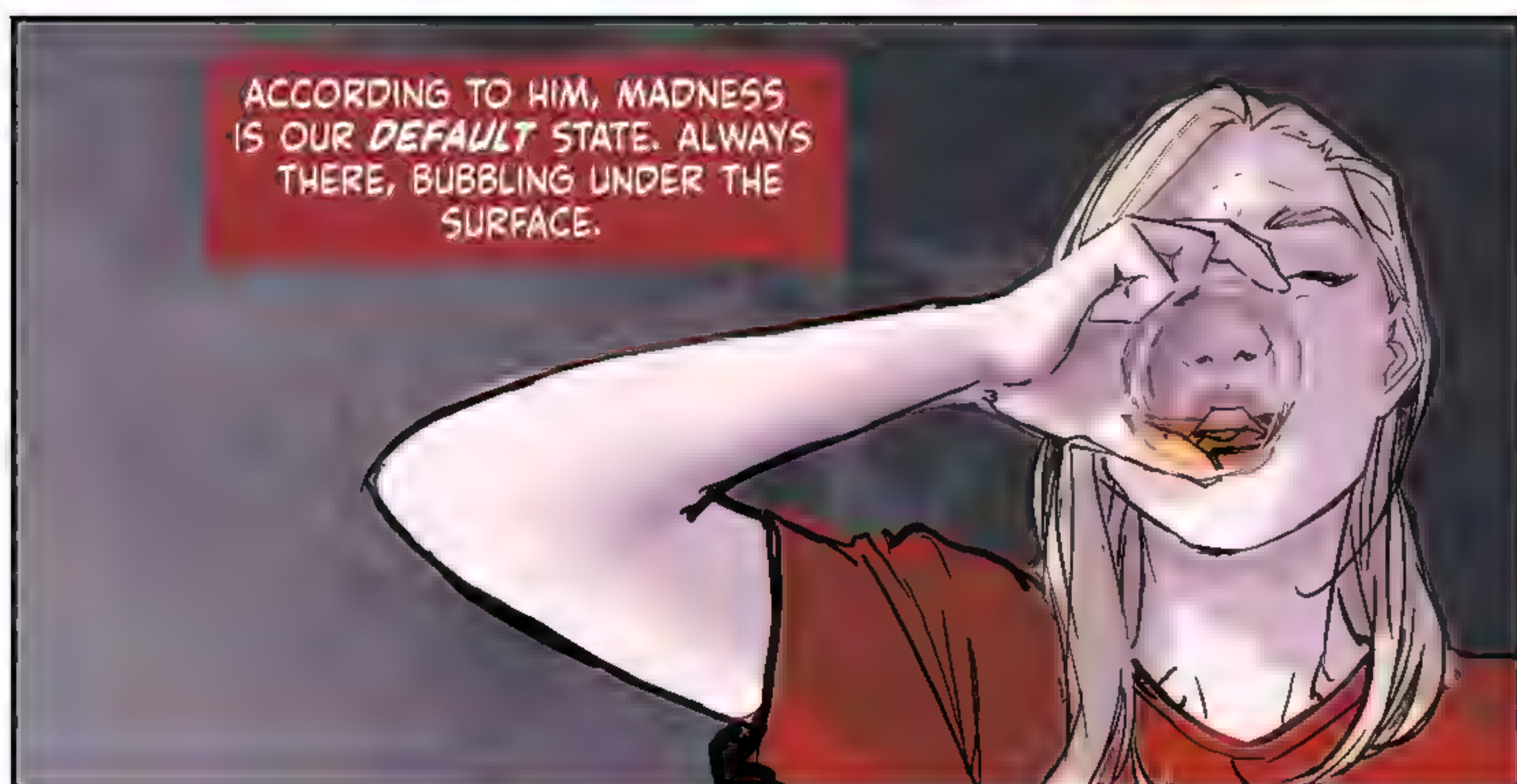
...BECAUSE I FELT SO
DAMNED *CLOSE!*



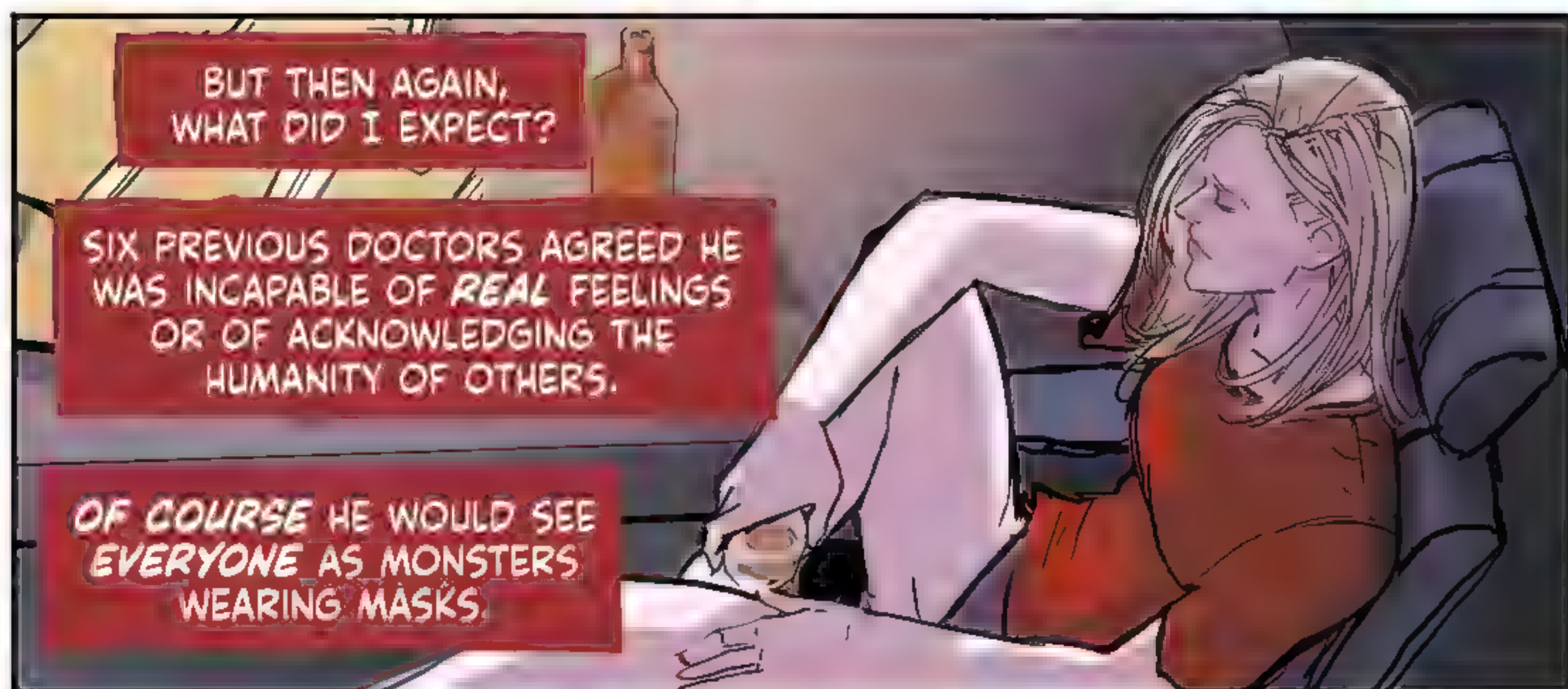
MY HYPOTHESIS WAS THAT LONG-TERM
EXPOSURE TO VIOLENT ENVIRONMENTS
COULD RESULT IN *PHYSICAL DAMAGE*
TO THE PARTS OF THE BRAIN THAT
PROCESS *EMPATHY*.

AND THERE *HE* WAS WITH HIS
STUPID LITTLE *STORY* ABOUT
HOW A *CITY* CAN CREATE
MONSTERS.

ON THE SURFACE, IT
WAS A PERFECT FIT.



ACCORDING TO HIM, MADNESS
IS OUR *DEFAULT* STATE. ALWAYS
THERE, BUBBLING UNDER THE
SURFACE.



BUT THEN AGAIN,
WHAT DID I EXPECT?

SIX PREVIOUS DOCTORS AGREED HE
WAS INCAPABLE OF *REAL* FEELINGS
OR OF ACKNOWLEDGING THE
HUMANITY OF OTHERS.

OF COURSE HE WOULD SEE
EVERYONE AS MONSTERS
WEARING MASKS.

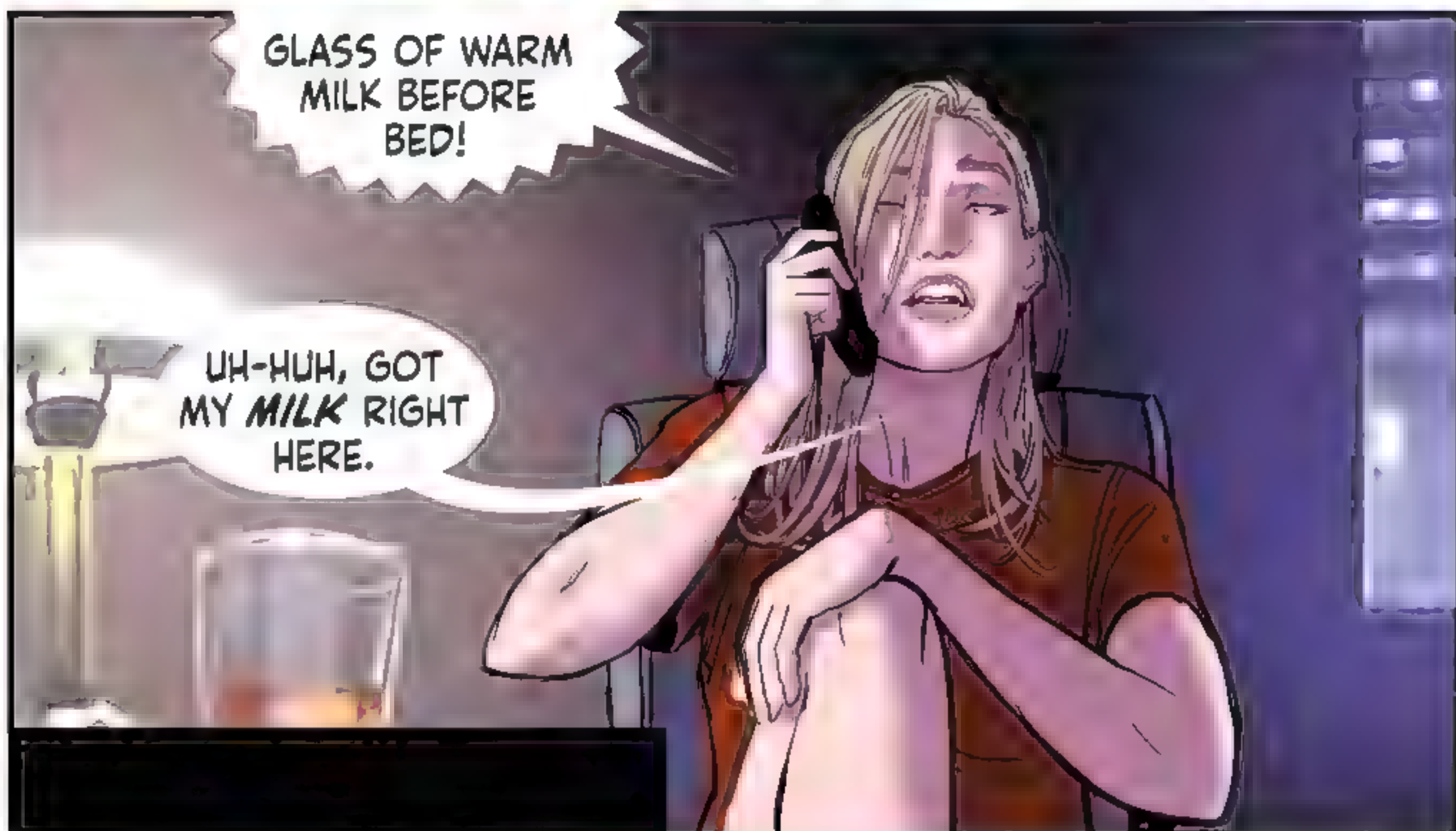
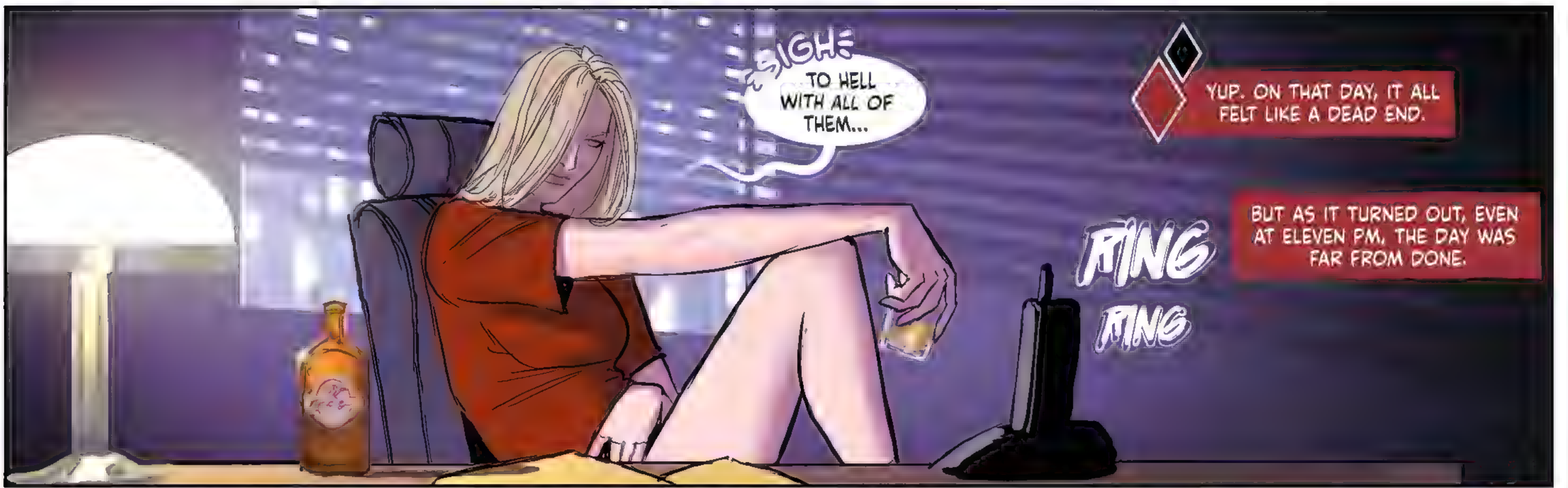


A MONTH INTO MY WORK AT
ARKHAM ASYLUM AND I WAS
BACK TO SQUARE ONE. NOT EVEN
CLOSE TO FINDING A SINGLE
PROMISING CANDIDATE FOR MY
RESEARCH.

I NEEDED *SOMEONE* TO TELL
ME WHO THEY WERE *BEFORE*
THEY...WELL...SNAPPED.



BUT THAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH THESE
SO-CALLED "*SUPER-VILLAINS*":
THEY'RE MORE INTERESTED IN TELLING
YOU ABOUT WHO THEY ARE *NOW*.



CLICK

THIS
IS **WGBS** NEWS AT
ELEVEN WITH **JACK
RYDER**.

GOOD EVENING, EVERYONE.
ON THIS SAD DAY, ALL OF GOTHAM
IS **REELING** FROM TRAGIC EVENTS
THAT TOOK PLACE EARLIER AT
GOTHAM SUPERIOR
COURT.

WHAT STARTED AS A
SIMPLE PRESS CONFERENCE BECAME
THE STUFF OF **NIGHTMARES** WHEN AN
ATTEMPT WAS MADE ON THE LIFE OF
DISTRICT ATTORNEY **HARVEY DENT**
BY ALLEGED CRIME BOSS
**SALVATORE "SAL"
MARONI**.

HERE IS WGBS'S FOOTAGE
OF SAID EVENT. **BE WARNED:** EVEN
THOUGH WE'RE NO STRANGERS TO
EXTREME VIOLENCE HERE ON GOTHAM
BROADCAST SYSTEM, THIS MAY BE
TOO MUCH FOR SOME VIEWERS.
DISCRETION IS
ADVISED.

MR. DENT! **SUMMER
GLEESON, WGBS.**
DO YOU HAVE A
MOMENT?

I'LL MAKE
ONE.

THE CITY'S BUILDING
COMMISSION HAS CALLED FOR
AN INQUIRY INTO THE BUSINESS
DEALINGS OF **SALVATORE
MARONI**.

IS YOUR
OFFICE A PART OF
THE INVESTIGATIVE
EFFORT?

YES AND NO.

MY OFFICE IS BUILDING OUR **OWN**
CASE AGAINST MR. MARONI FOR
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES THAT EXTEND
FAR BEYOND RIGGING
CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT
BIDDING.

SUCH AS?

THAT I'M
NOT ABLE TO
DISCLOSE RIGHT
NOW...

BUT I CAN TELL YOU THIS: **SAL
MARONI** IS AN **IMPORTANT**
MAN. IMPORTANT ENOUGH
FOR **THE POLICE** TO
DELIVER HIS **COFFEE**,
IT SEEMS...



BUT THIS
IS ABOUT TO
CHANGE.



MARONI.

BE CAREFUL
OF PROMISING **TOO
MUCH** THERE,
DENT!



SEE, ME? I'M A **BUSINESSMAN.**
I SELL A PRODUCT PEOPLE
WANT. BUT YOU?

YOU'RE A
POLITICIAN **PRETENDING**
TO BE THE LAW. YOU TOO
ARE HERE TO SELL A
PRODUCT, AREN'T
YOU?

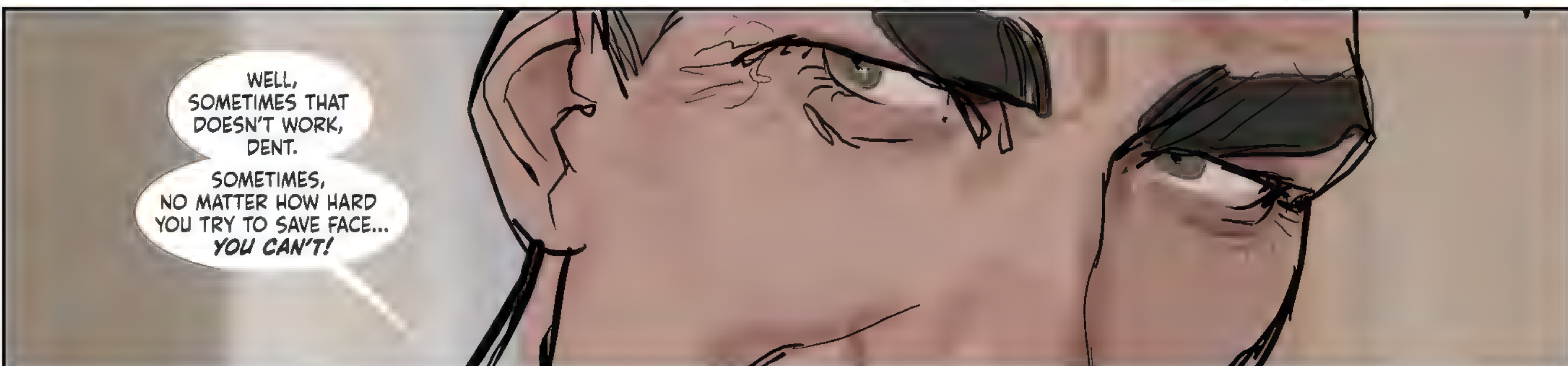


YOUR PRODUCT
IS THIS WHOLE **PIOUS ACT**
OF YOURS, THIS **ILLUSION**
THAT YOU GOT THINGS
UNDER **CONTROL.** BUT
YOU DON'T!



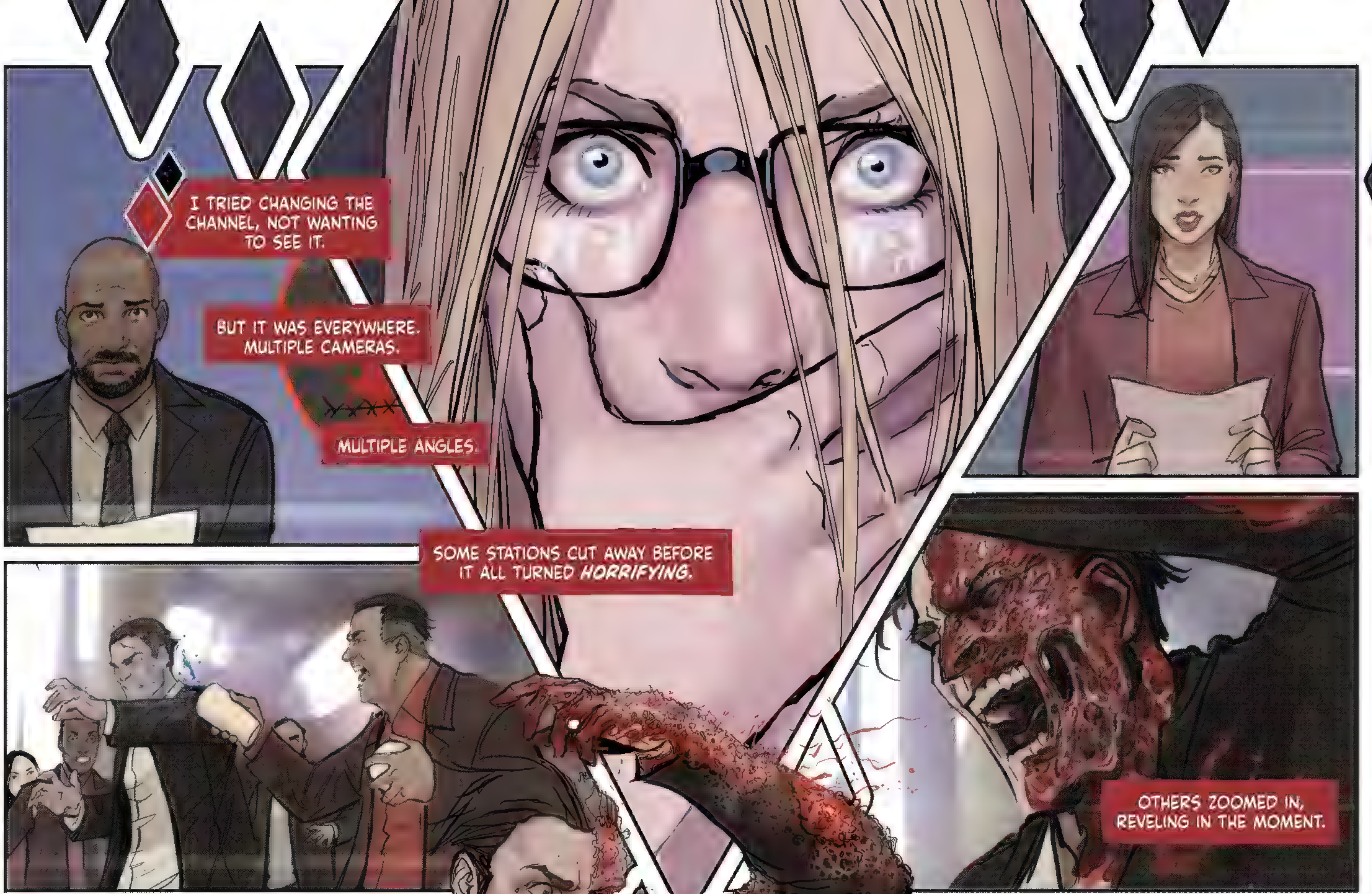
IN THE END, LIKE EVERY OTHER
POLITICIAN, YOU ARE NOTHING
BUT **BROKEN PROMISES** IN
AN EXPENSIVE SUIT.

AND WHEN PEOPLE
STOP BUYING WHAT YOU'RE
SELLING, YOU THROW **HONEST**
MEN LIKE ME UNDER THE BUS...
NO MATTER **WHO**
GETS HURT.



WELL,
SOMETIMES THAT
DOESN'T WORK,
DENT.

SOMETIMES,
NO MATTER HOW HARD
YOU TRY TO SAVE FACE...
YOU CAN'T!



I TRIED CHANGING THE CHANNEL, NOT WANTING TO SEE IT.

BUT IT WAS EVERYWHERE. MULTIPLE CAMERAS.

MULTIPLE ANGLES.

SOME STATIONS CUT AWAY BEFORE IT ALL TURNED HORRIFYING.

OTHERS ZOOMED IN, REVELING IN THE MOMENT.

NOW DIE
YOU TWO-FACED
SON OF A
BITCH!
THIS
IS FOR MY
BOY!

AND AS I WATCHED IT HAPPENING, A SICKENING THOUGHT TORMENTED ME. I'D WANTED TO HURT HIM MYSELF, JUST THAT VERY MORNING...

DR. MATHEWS WAS RIGHT. IT WAS EVERYWHERE, AND I COULDN'T STOP WATCHING. AND THE ATTACK ON DENT WAS ONLY THE **START...**

DOCTORS CONFIRM THE CHEMICAL USED WAS NOT A TYPICAL HYDROCHLORIC ACID, BUT A CURIOUS **MIX** MOST LIKELY ORIGINATING FROM **AXIS CHEMICAL FACILITIES**.

BECAUSE OF THE UNIQUELY DEVASTATING EFFECTS OF THIS SUBSTANCE, DISTRICT ATTORNEY DENT HAS BEEN PLACED IN A **MEDICALLY INDUCED COMA**.

SALVATORE MARONI WAS TAKEN INTO POLICE CUSTODY, WHICH IN ANY OTHER CITY WOULD SERVE AS EPILOGUE TO THIS SAD STORY.

BUT THIS IS **GOTHAM**, AFTER ALL, AND HERE THINGS HAVE A WAY OF ESCALATING.

JUST ONE HOUR AFTER MARONI'S ARREST, WE RECEIVED NEWS THAT HIS POLICE TRANSPORT VEHICLE HAD BEEN **COMMANDEERED** BY UNKNOWN ASSAILANTS.

LATER, THIS VIDEO WAS DELIVERED **ANONYMOUSLY** TO THE WGBS STUDIO.

ONCE AGAIN, **VIEWER DISCRETION IS ADVISED**.

CITIZENS OF GOTHAM: FOR YEARS WE OF **THE GOTHAM CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT** HAVE SERVED, PROTECTED, AND **BLED** FOR THIS CITY ONLY TO SEE OUR SACRIFICES **MOCKED** BY THE SAME CRIMINALS RETURNING TO OUR STREETS AGAIN AND AGAIN--ALL TOO OFTEN THANKS TO THE LEGAL MEDDLING OF BLEEDING-HEART **FOOLS**.

TODAY, AFTER THE ATTACK ON DISTRICT ATTORNEY DENT, WE ARE **DONE** BEING MOCKED.

OVER AND OVER, THE MERCY OF OUR JUDICIAL SYSTEM HAS ILL SERVED YOU ALL.

CRIMINALS DON'T FEAR THE HAND OF JUSTICE BECAUSE JUSTICE LACKS THE MECHANISM TO TRULY **PUNISH** THEM.

WELL, FROM NOW ON, WE WILL BE THAT MECHANISM. **WE WILL BE THAT HAND.**

CRIMINALS OF GOTHAM, YOU'VE MET YOUR JUDGES AND YOUR JURIES. NOW, MEET YOUR **EXECUTIONERS**.

WE WILL START WITH SAL HERE. THIS IS YOUR BIG MOMENT, SAL! ANY LAST WORDS?

FUCK YOU!

THEY PIXELATED THE MOMENT OF THE SHOT, BUT THE **SOUND** REMAINED...

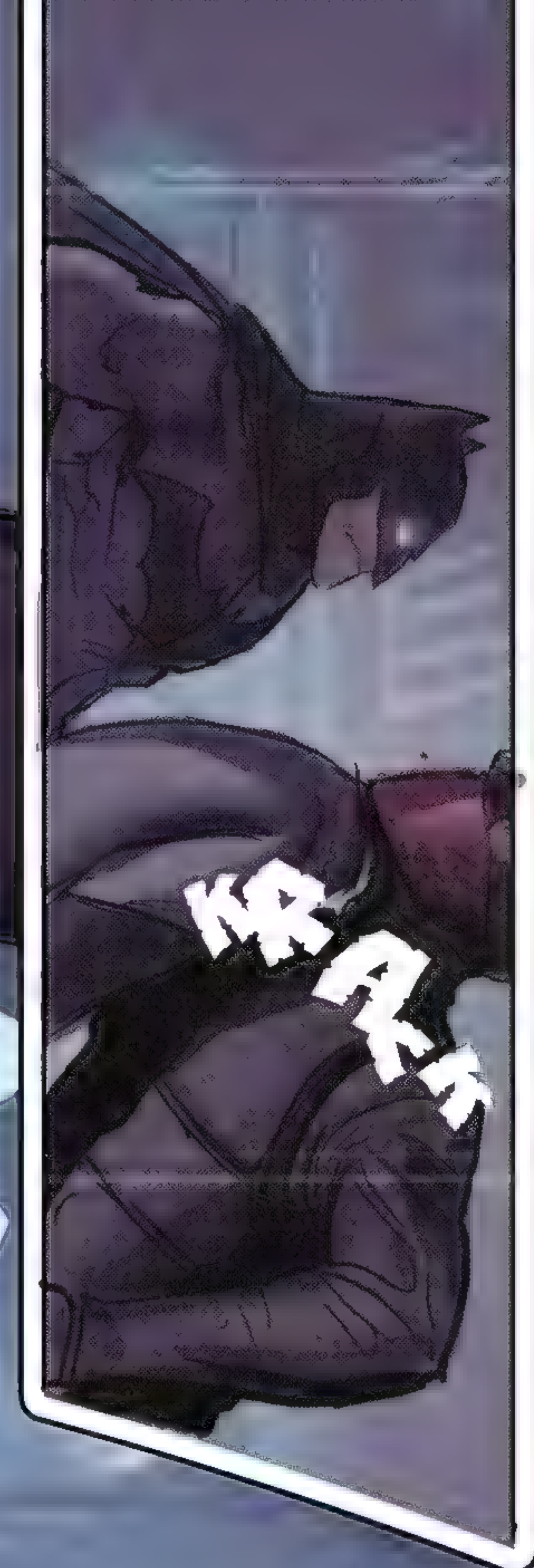
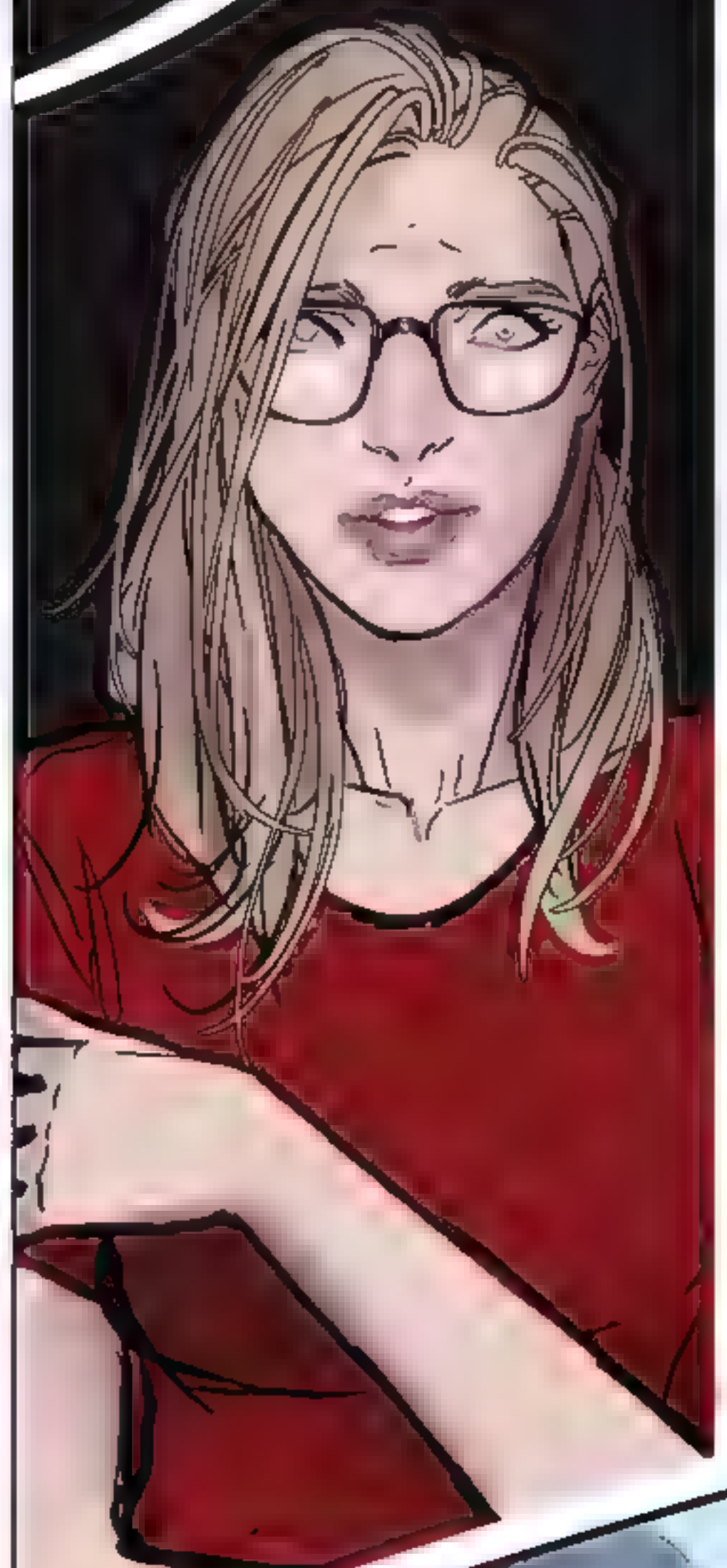
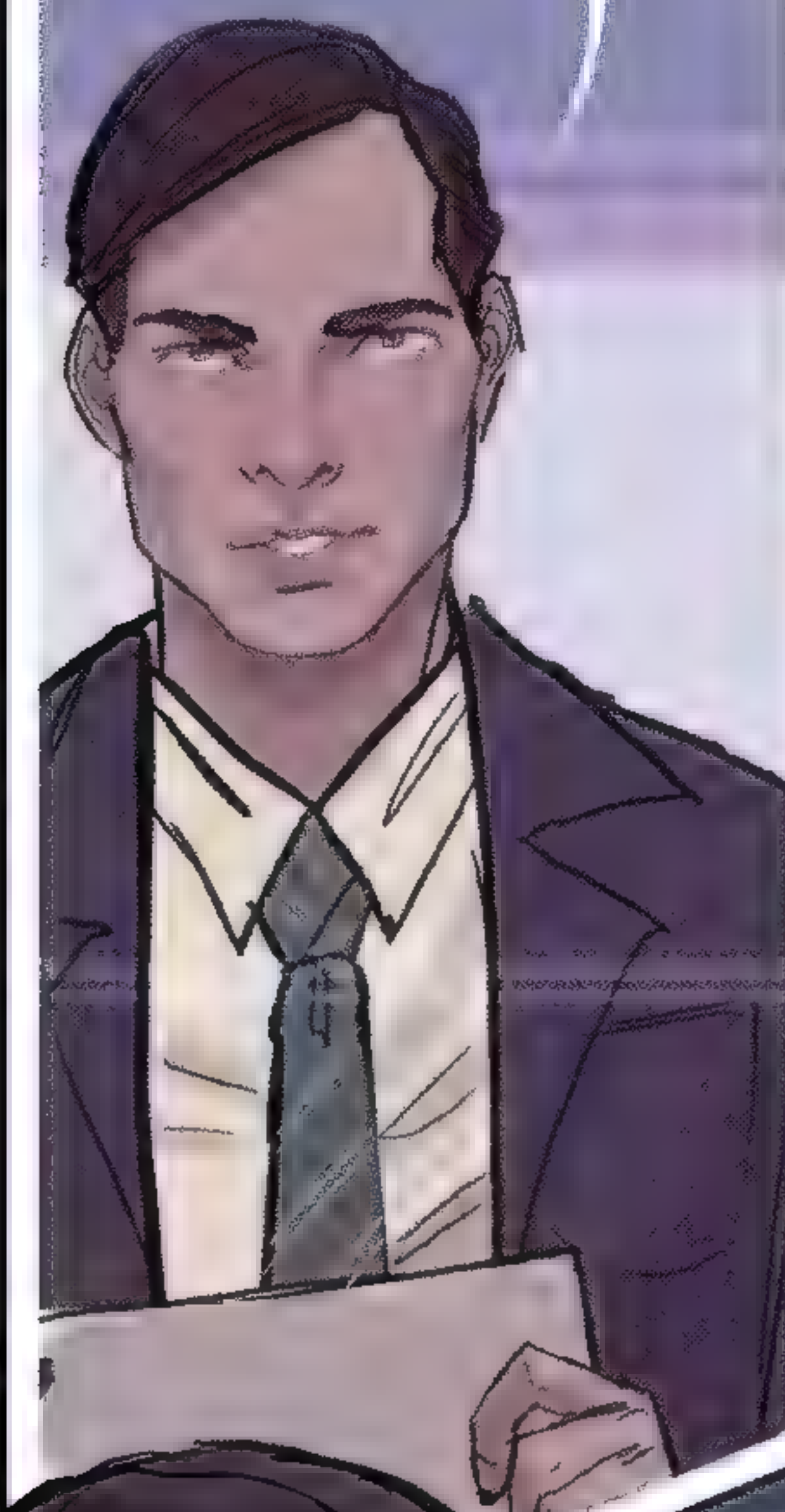
STILL, CONTRARY TO THEIR OWN PROMISES, IT WOULD SEEM THE EXECUTIONERS' REIGN OF TERROR WILL BE SHORT-LIVED--THANKS TO BATMAN.

BECAUSE TO OUR GREAT SURPRISE, THE TAPE DOESN'T END WITH THE MURDER OF MR. MARONI...

THE CAMERA KEPT ROLLING, CAPTURING THE GRAND ENTRANCE OF GOTHAM'S OWN *DARK KNIGHT* AND HIS SWIFT INCAPACITATION OF THE PERPETRATORS.

UNFORTUNATELY THE FOOTAGE ENDS WHEN THE CAMERA IS KNOCKED OVER.

BUT THERE YOU HAVE IT-- VIGILANTE VERSUS VIGILANTE.



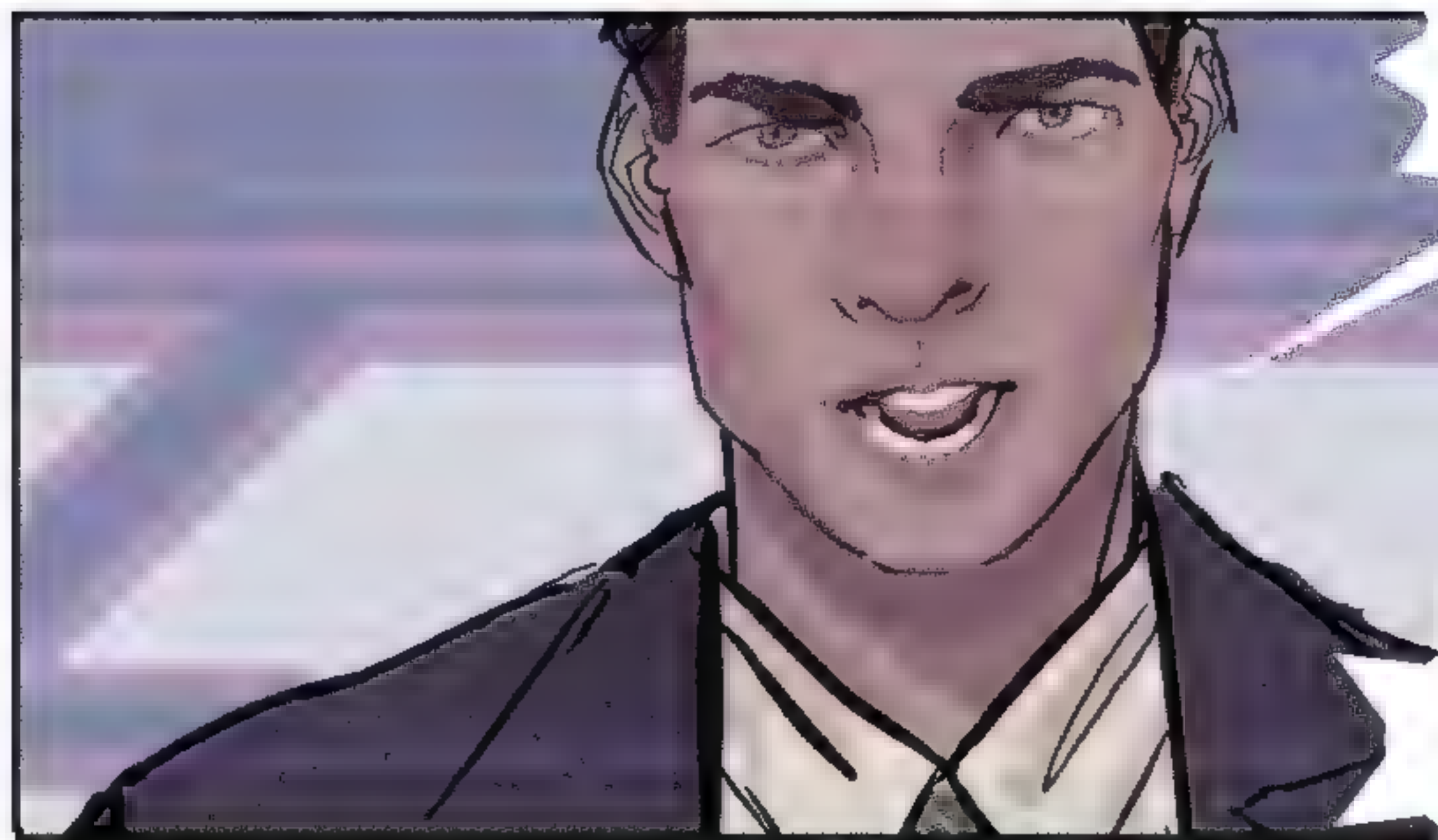
ARGH!

THUNK

IT'S THE BAT! SHOOT-- ARGH!

THUNK

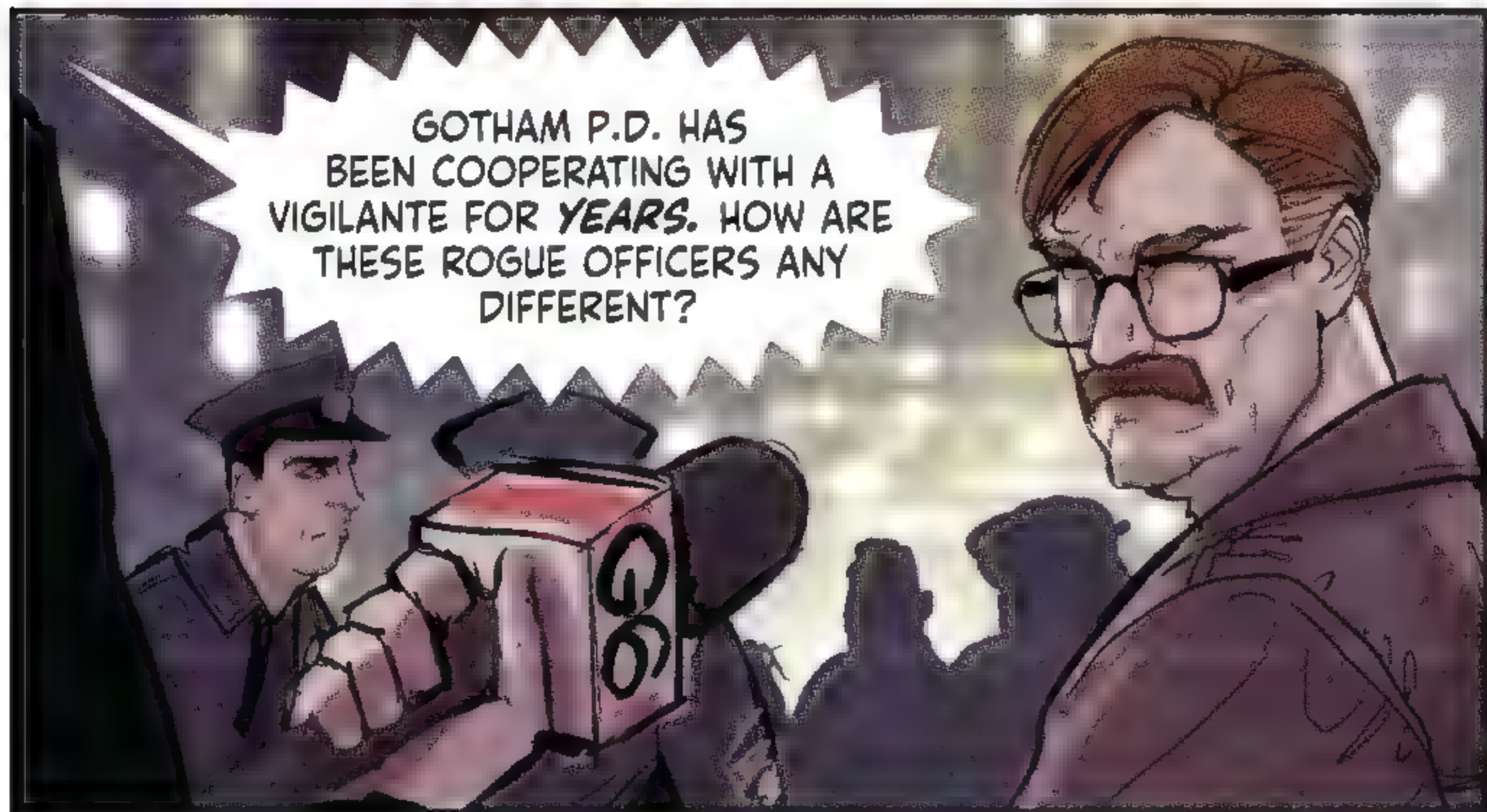
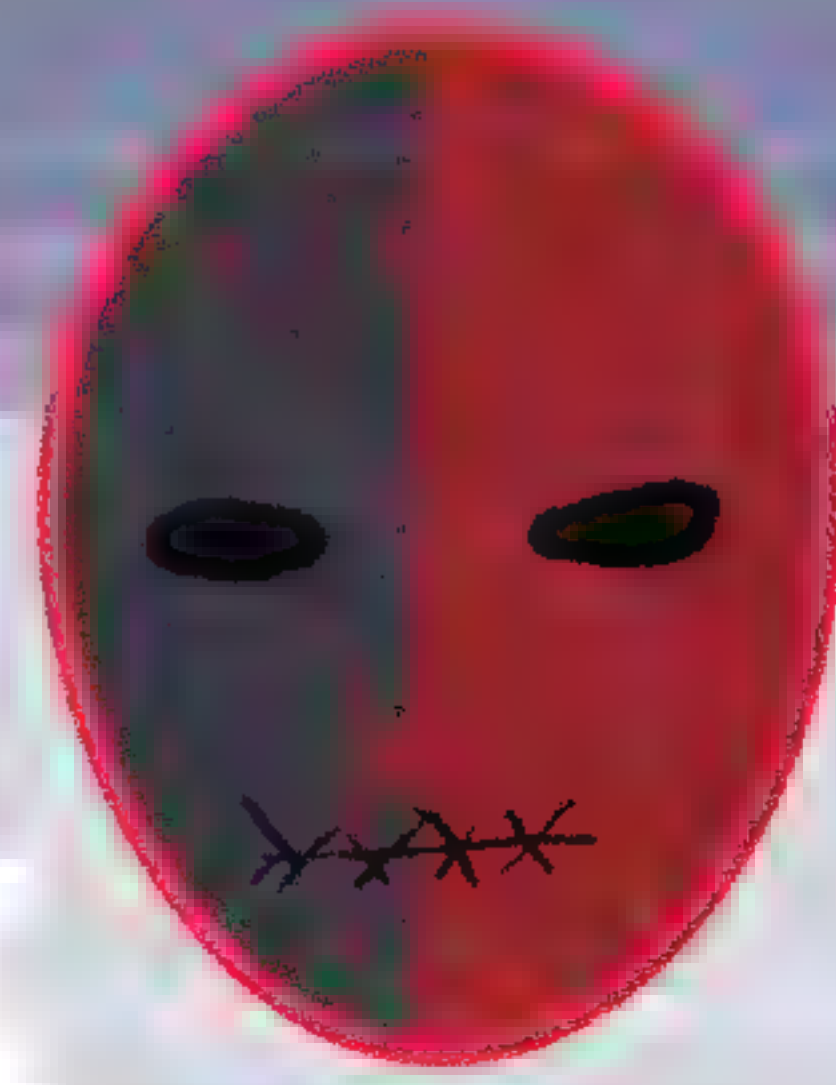




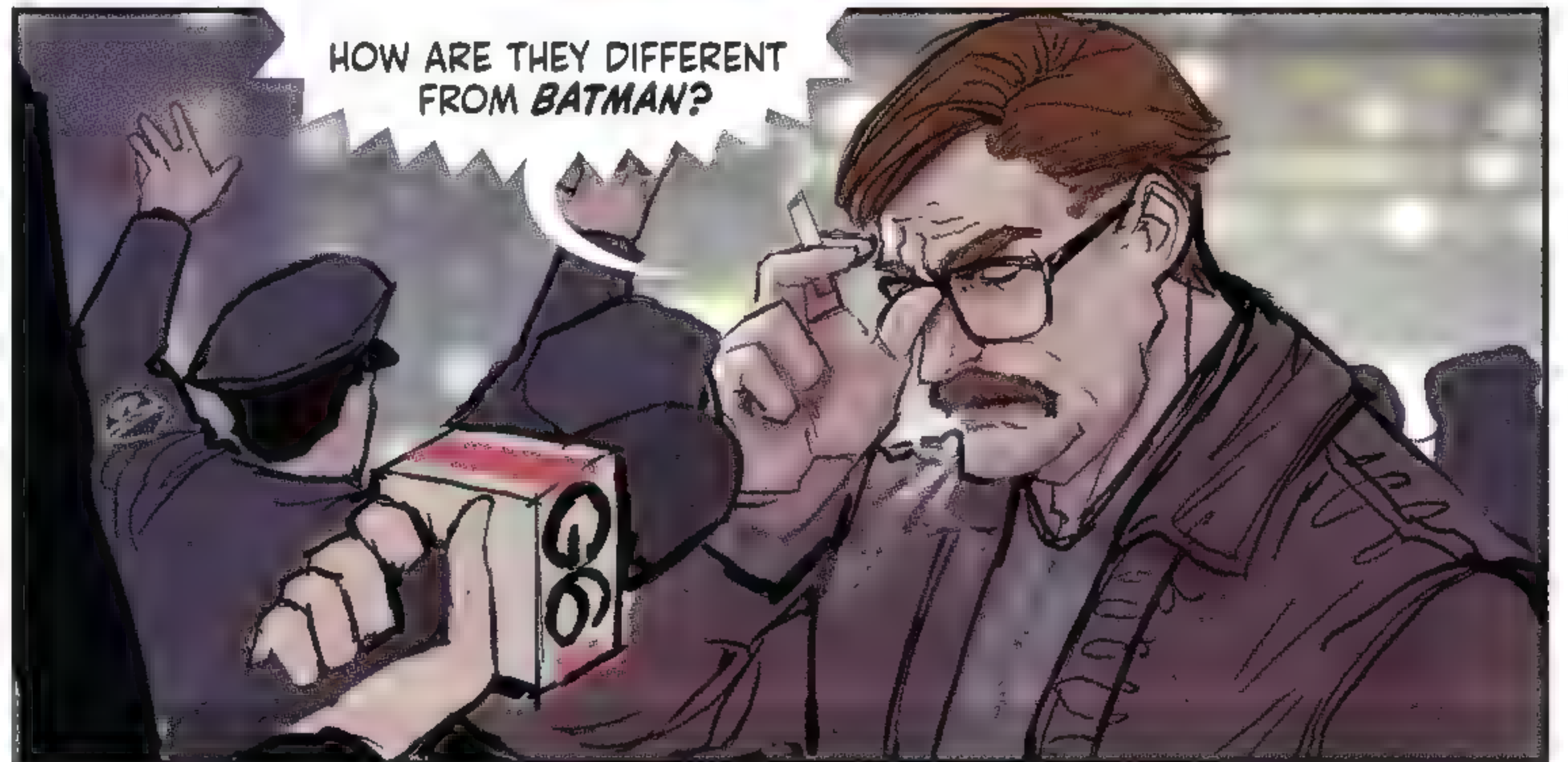
THESE EXECUTIONERS ARE SEEN
IN A **POSITIVE LIGHT** BY 68
PERCENT OF GOTHAMITES
WE SURVEYED.

AT THE SAME
TIME, G.C.P.D.'S
APPROVAL NUMBERS
ARE AS LOW AS
31 PERCENT.

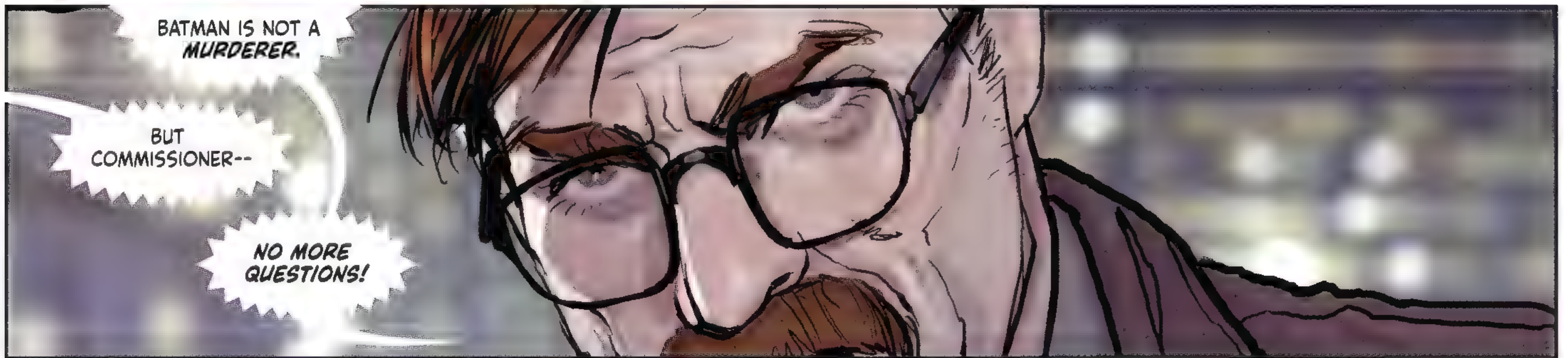
OUR REPORTER
SUMMER GLEESON TRIED TO GET SOME
INSIGHT ON THIS MATTER FROM THE POLICE
COMMISSIONER, **JAMES GORDON**.



GOTHAM P.D. HAS
BEEN COOPERATING WITH A
VIGILANTE FOR **YEARS**. HOW ARE
THESE ROGUE OFFICERS ANY
DIFFERENT?



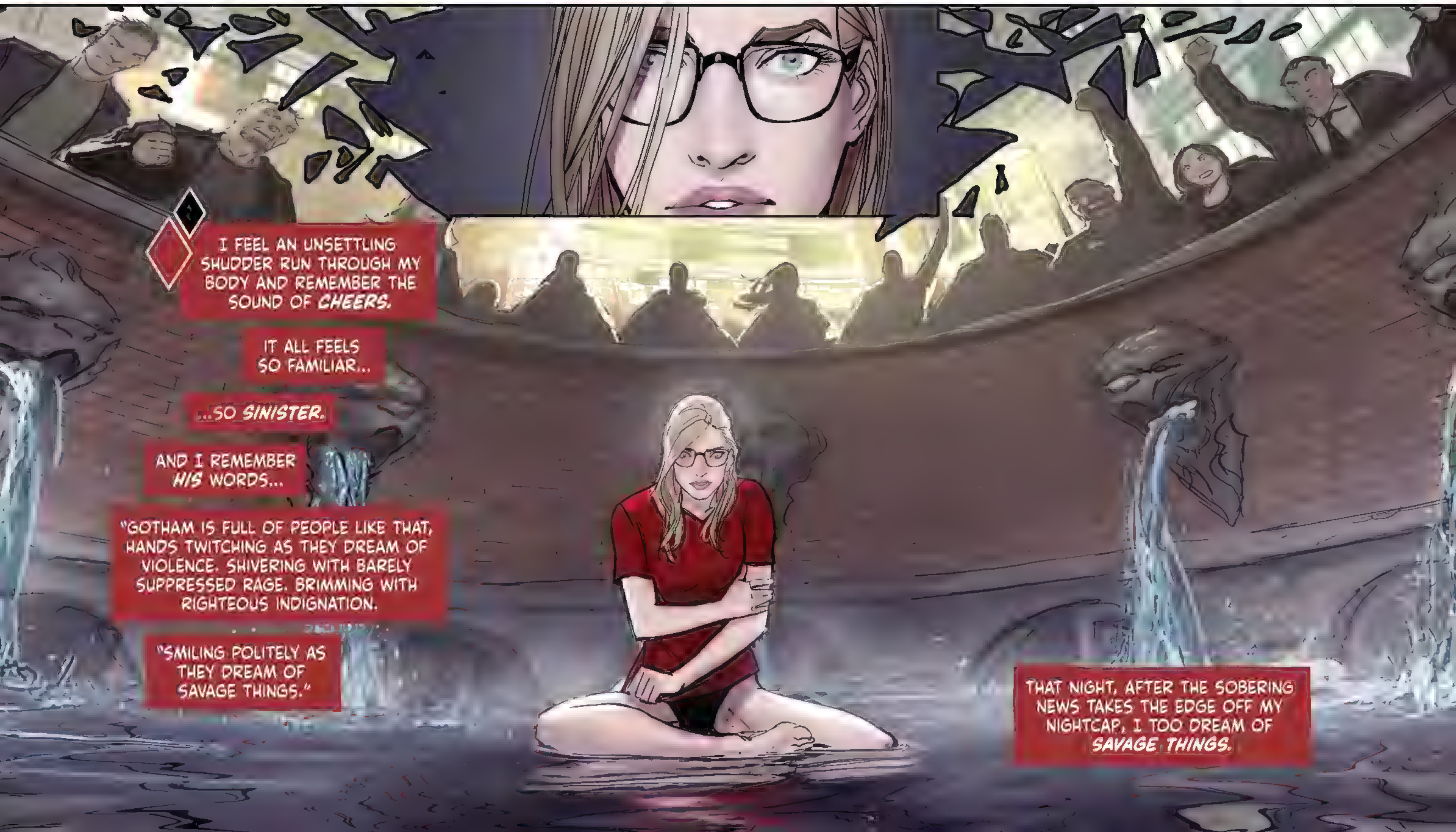
HOW ARE THEY DIFFERENT
FROM **BATMAN**?



BATMAN IS NOT A
MURDERER.

BUT
COMMISSIONER--

**NO MORE
QUESTIONS!**



I FEEL AN UNSETTLING
SHUDDER RUN THROUGH MY
BODY AND REMEMBER THE
SOUND OF **CHEERS**.

IT ALL FEELS
SO FAMILIAR...

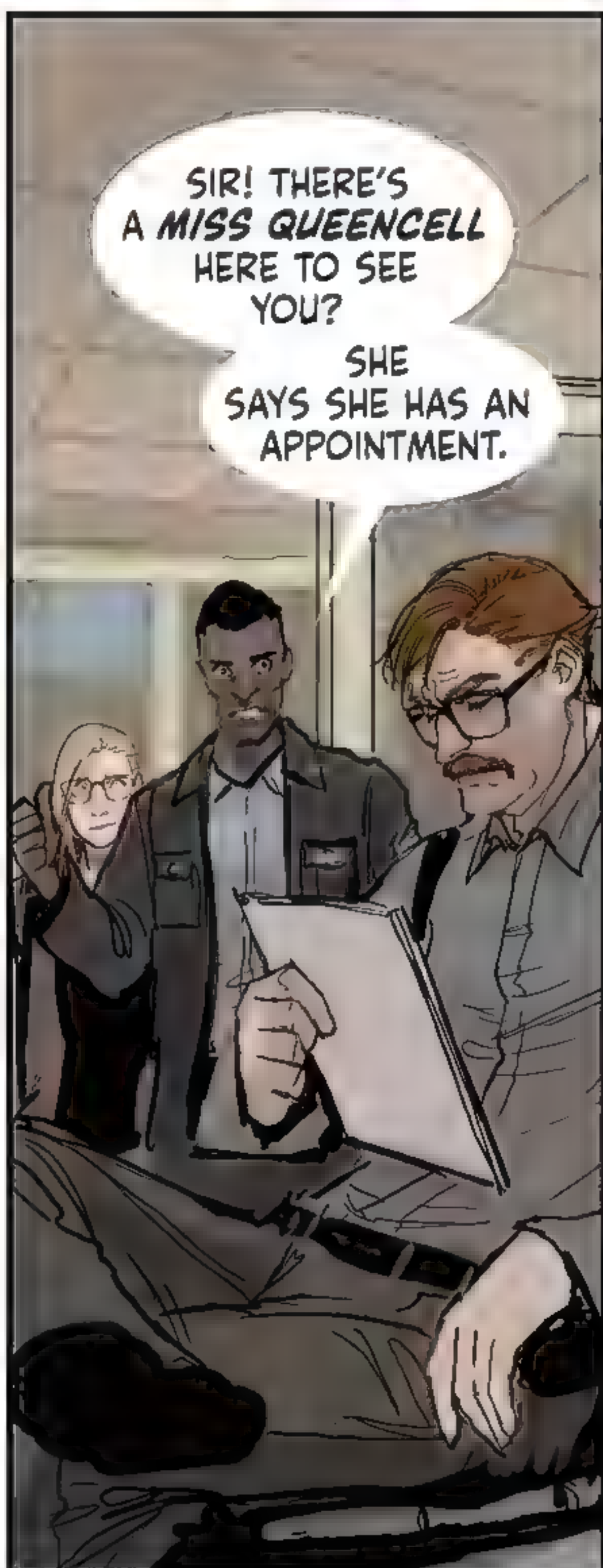
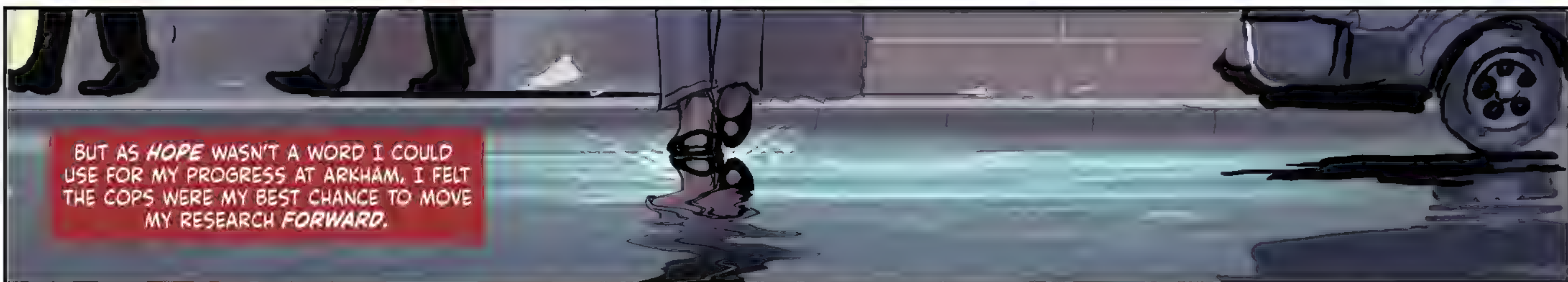
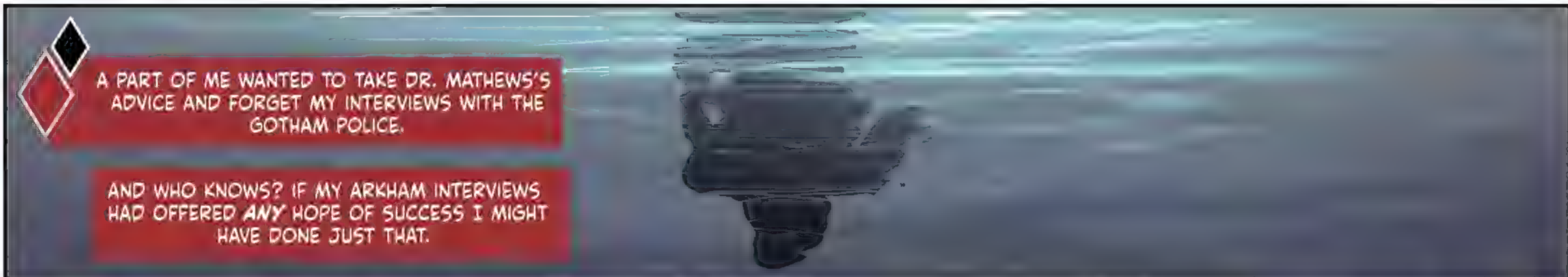
...SO **SINISTER**.

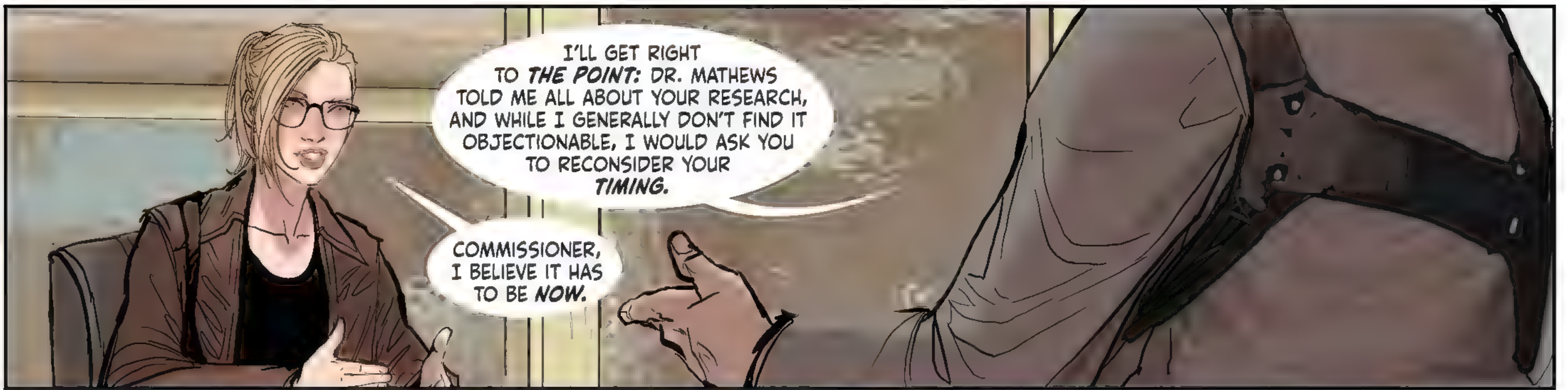
AND I REMEMBER
HIS WORDS...

"GOTHAM IS FULL OF PEOPLE LIKE THAT,
HANDS TWITCHING AS THEY DREAM OF
VIOLENCE. SHIVERING WITH BARELY
SUPPRESSED RAGE. BRIMMING WITH
RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION.

"SMILING POLITELY AS
THEY DREAM OF
SAVAGE THINGS."

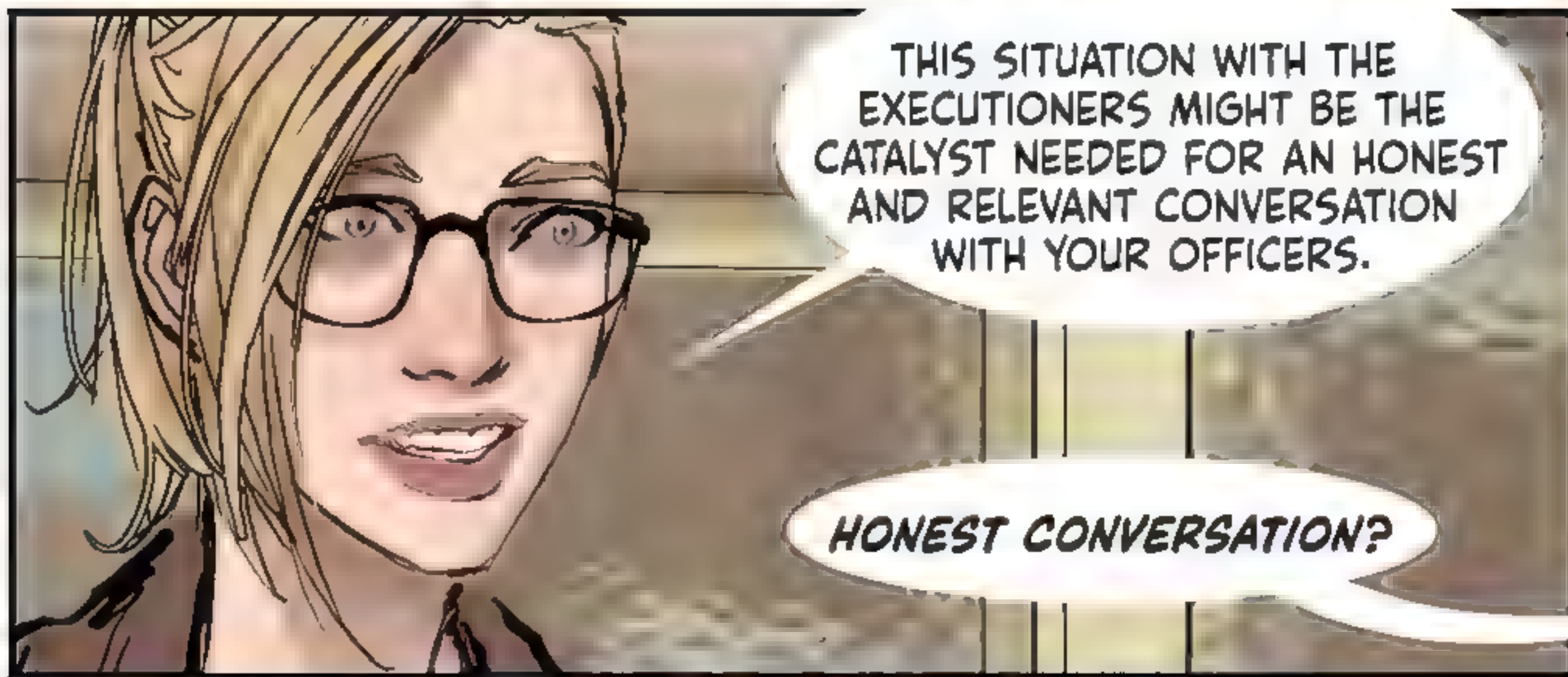
THAT NIGHT, AFTER THE SOBERING
NEWS TAKES THE EDGE OFF MY
NIGHTCAP, I TOO DREAM OF
SAVAGE THINGS.





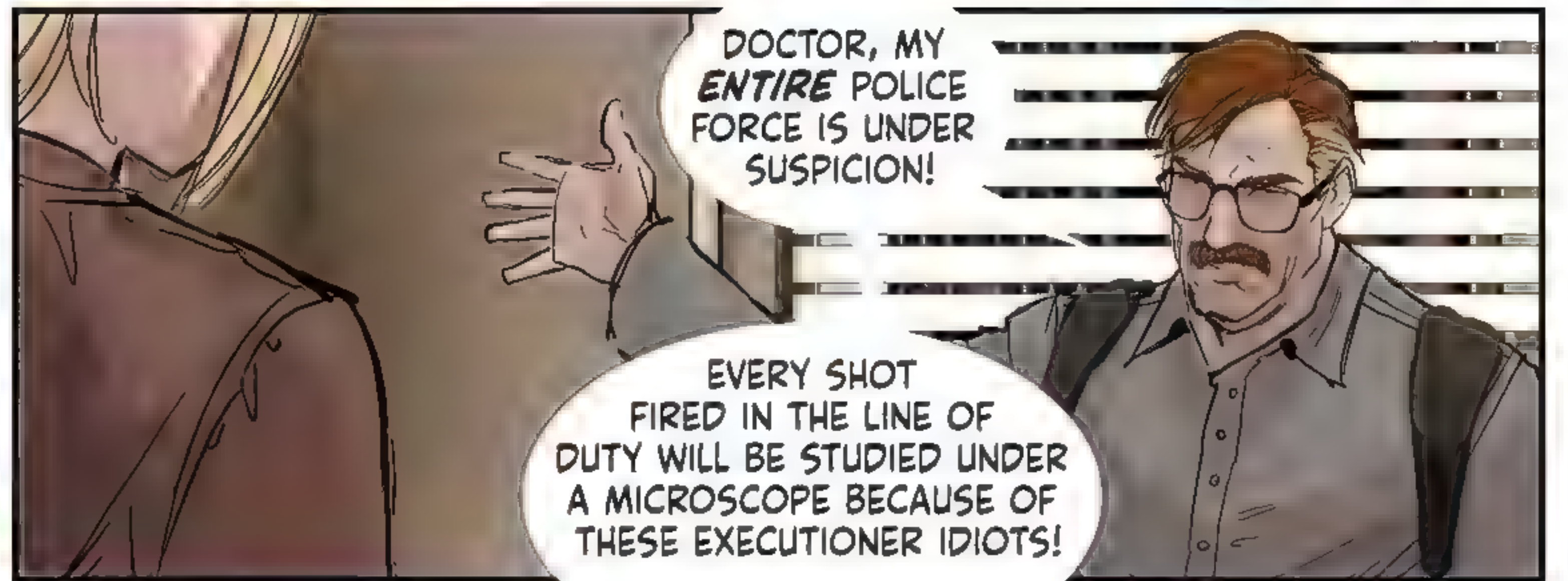
I'LL GET RIGHT
TO **THE POINT**: DR. MATHEWS
TOLD ME ALL ABOUT YOUR RESEARCH,
AND WHILE I GENERALLY DON'T FIND IT
OBJECTIONABLE, I WOULD ASK YOU
TO RECONSIDER YOUR
TIMING.

COMMISSIONER,
I BELIEVE IT HAS
TO BE **NOW**.



THIS SITUATION WITH THE
EXECUTIONERS MIGHT BE THE
CATALYST NEEDED FOR AN HONEST
AND RELEVANT CONVERSATION
WITH YOUR OFFICERS.

HONEST CONVERSATION?



DOCTOR, MY
ENTIRE POLICE
FORCE IS UNDER
SUSPICION!

EVERY SHOT
FIRED IN THE LINE OF
DUTY WILL BE STUDIED UNDER
A MICROSCOPE BECAUSE OF
THESE EXECUTIONER IDIOTS!



I...I DIDN'T
KNOW...

LISTEN, EVERYONE
HERE IS ON EDGE RIGHT
NOW--INCLUDING
ME.

BUT JUST
SO YOU KNOW I'M
ON THE LEVEL WITH YOU,
I'LL SHOW YOU
SOMETHING.
COME ON.



BY THE WAY, IF
ANYONE ASKS, YOU'RE A
UNION-SPONSORED THERAPIST
HERE TO LOOK AFTER THE
OFFICERS.

WHY NOT
JUST TELL THE TRUTH?
I'M HERE DOING
RESEARCH.



DR. QUINZEL, THESE
ARE STRANGE TIMES FULL OF
STRANGER CRIMINALS. THE LAST
PSYCHIATRIST TO DO RESEARCH
HERE WAS **JONATHAN CRANE**
AND...WELL LET'S JUST SAY
THAT DIDN'T END
WELL.

UH...RIGHT.
FAIR ENOUGH.

AND
THAT WAS
BEFORE THIS WHOLE
"EXECUTIONERS"
BUSINESS.



HERE WE ARE.
BEING FROM THE CRIMINAL
PSYCHOLOGY CENTER, I TRUST
YOU CAN KEEP WHAT YOU
SEE HERE TO **YOUR-
SELF**.

OF COURSE!



MEET **SERGEANT HOSKINS** OF THE G.C.P.D. S.W.A.T. TEAM. DECORATED COP. A HERO OF THE FORCE.

HE WAS ONE OF THE THREE EXECUTIONERS APPREHENDED BY BATMAN.



IF THERE WERE ONLY THREE OF YOU THERE, HOW WAS THE CAMERA FOOTAGE DELIVERED TO THE WGBS STUDIO?

SOMEONE DROPPED IT OFF ANONYMOUSLY!



I DON'T KNOW, MAYBE IT WAS **THE BAT**?

YEAH, MUST HAVE BEEN HIM! MAYBE HE WAS TRYING TO SAY HE'S GONNA FIGHT TO **PROTECT** MURDEROUS FILTH LIKE MARONI.



OR NOT?

MAYBE THERE'S MORE OF US READY TO DO WHAT **NEEDS** TO BE DONE!

AND WHAT WOULD THAT BE?



WHAT WOULD THAT BE?

TAKE THEM OUT! FOR GOOD!

DO TO **THEM** WHAT THEY WOULD DO TO YOU WITHOUT HESITATION!

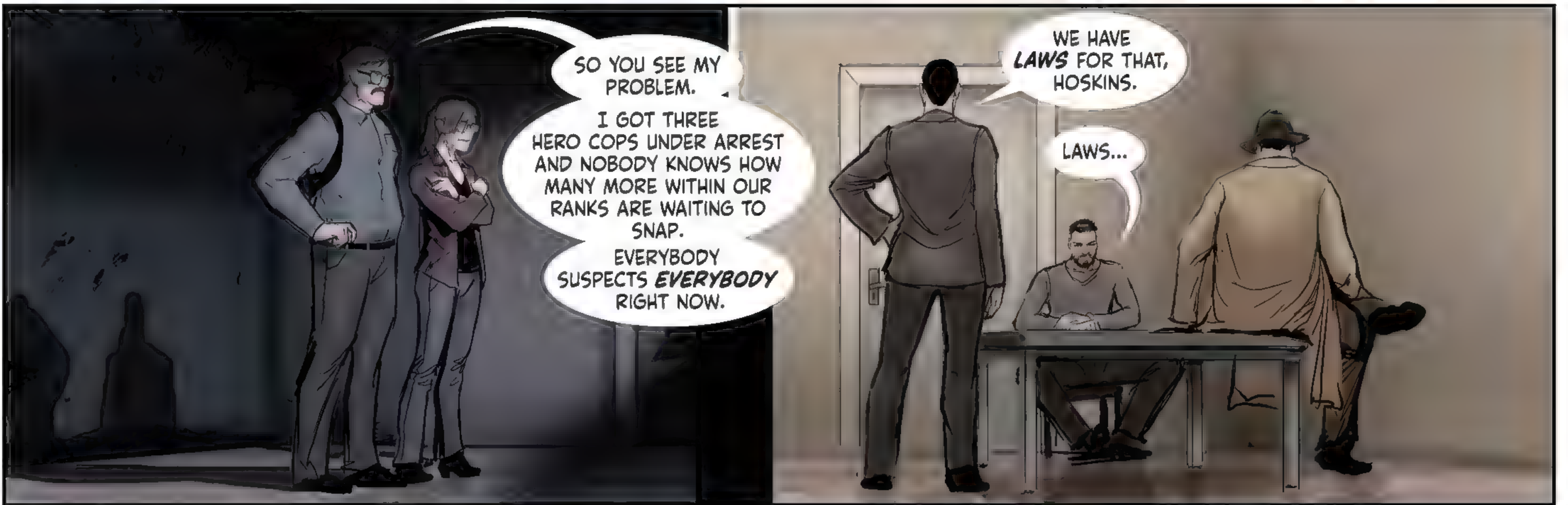
YOU THINK SOMEONE SOMEONE LIKE **MR. FREEZE** OR **ZSASZ** OR **THE JOKER** WOULD GIVE YOU A CHANCE IF YOU WERE ON THE BUSINESS END OF THEIR WEAPONS?

ALL OF THEM ARE IRREDEEMABLE, MERCILESS KILLERS AND YOU **KNOW IT!**



I'M SORRY,
IF THIS IS TOO MUCH
FOR YOU--

IT'S FINE.
HE'S NOT
MY FIRST MURDERER
RANTING BEHIND SOME
GLASS.



SO YOU SEE MY
PROBLEM.

I GOT THREE
HERO COPS UNDER ARREST
AND NOBODY KNOWS HOW
MANY MORE WITHIN OUR
RANKS ARE WAITING TO
SNAP.

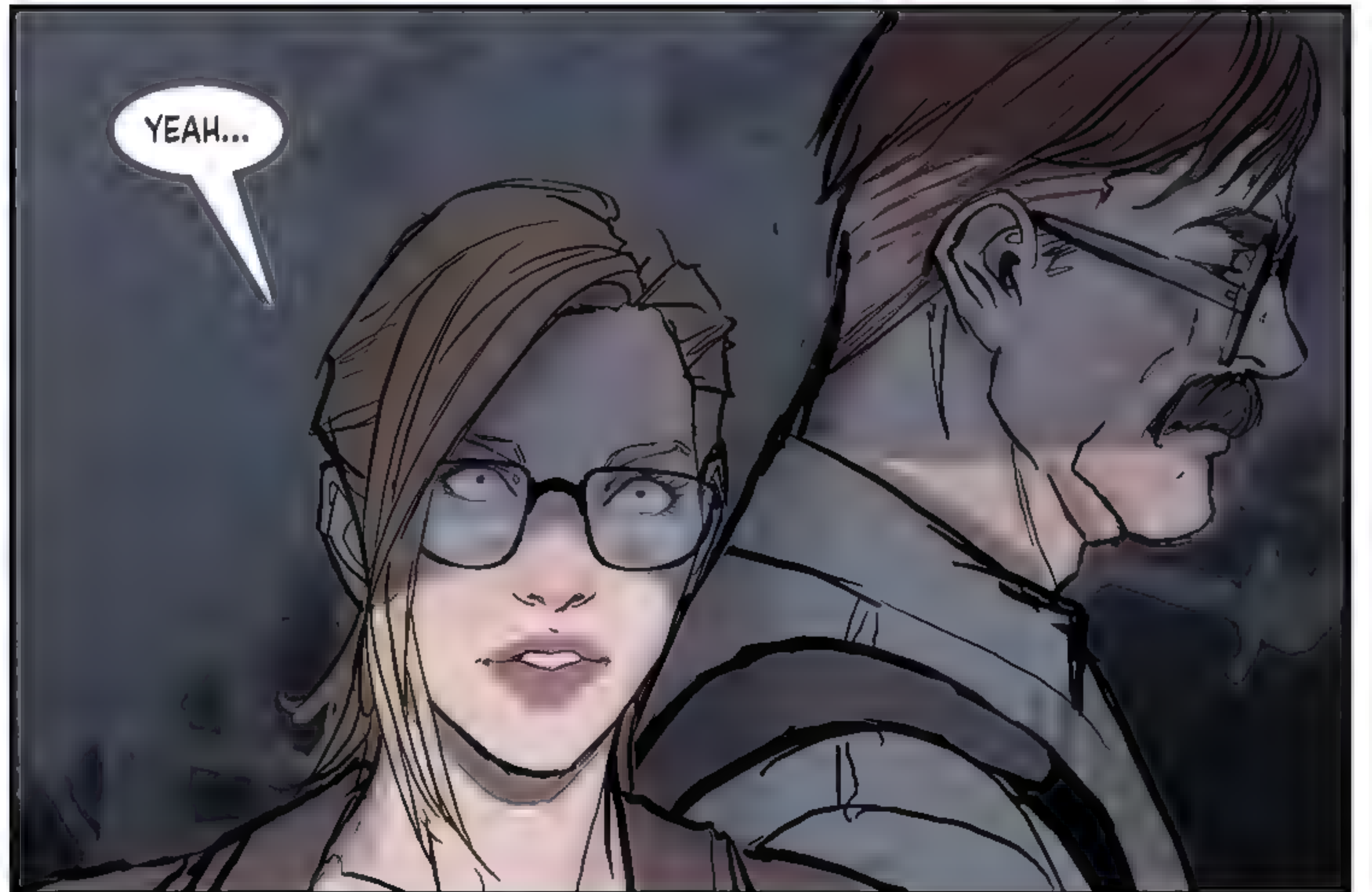
EVERYBODY
SUSPECTS *EVERYBODY*
RIGHT NOW.

WE HAVE
LAWS FOR THAT,
HOSKINS.

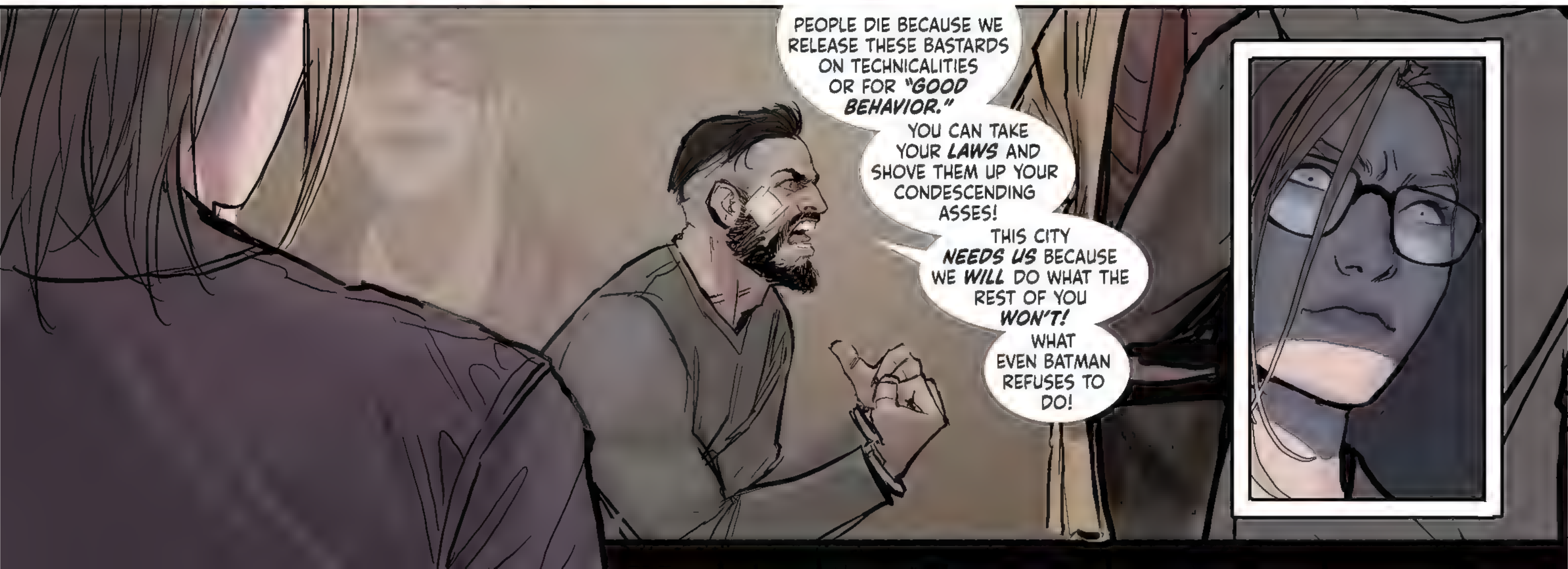
LAWS...



SO TRUST ME
WHEN I TELL YOU, YOU
WILL *NOT* FIND ANYONE
WILLING TO SHARE THEIR
PERSONAL FAILINGS WITH
A PSYCHIATRIST
TODAY.



YEAH...

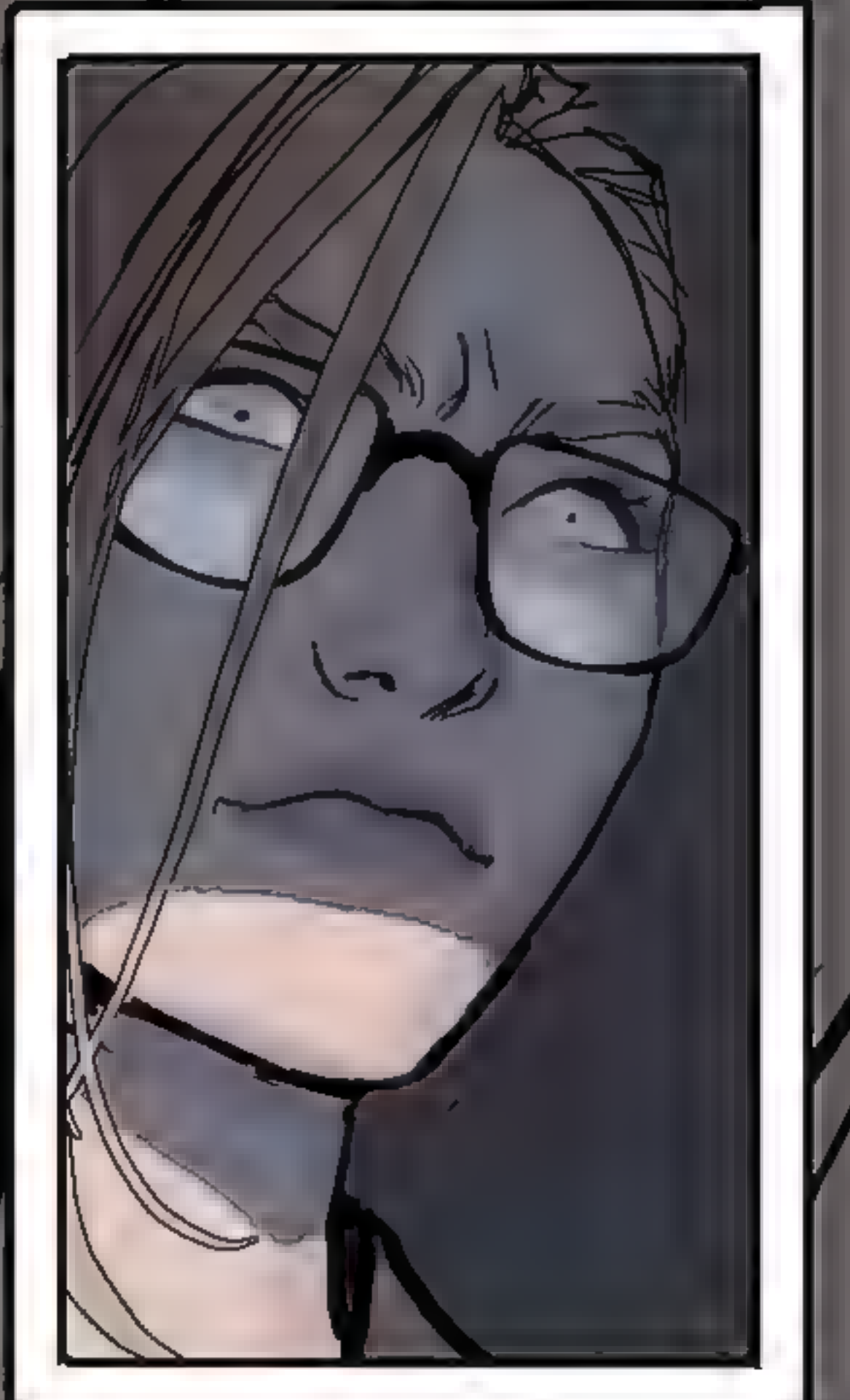


PEOPLE DIE BECAUSE WE
RELEASE THESE BASTARDS
ON TECHNICALITIES
OR FOR "GOOD
BEHAVIOR."

YOU CAN TAKE
YOUR *LAWS* AND
SHOVE THEM UP YOUR
CONDESCENDING
ASSES!

THIS CITY
NEEDS US BECAUSE
WE *WILL* DO WHAT THE
REST OF YOU
WON'T!

WHAT
EVEN BATMAN
REFUSES TO
DO!





COMMISSIONER,
WAIT!



YOU CAN *CALL* HIM,
CAN'T YOU?

BATMAN!

I DON'T
THINK HE WOULD BE
INTERESTED IN AN
INTERVIEW.

I JUST
NEED TO ASK HIM
SOMETHING.



stinks
LORD KNOWS
WE TURN THE BLOODY
SIGNAL ON EVERY NIGHT
AT THIS POINT.

FINE. STICK
AROUND...IF YOU HAVE
THE *TIME*.



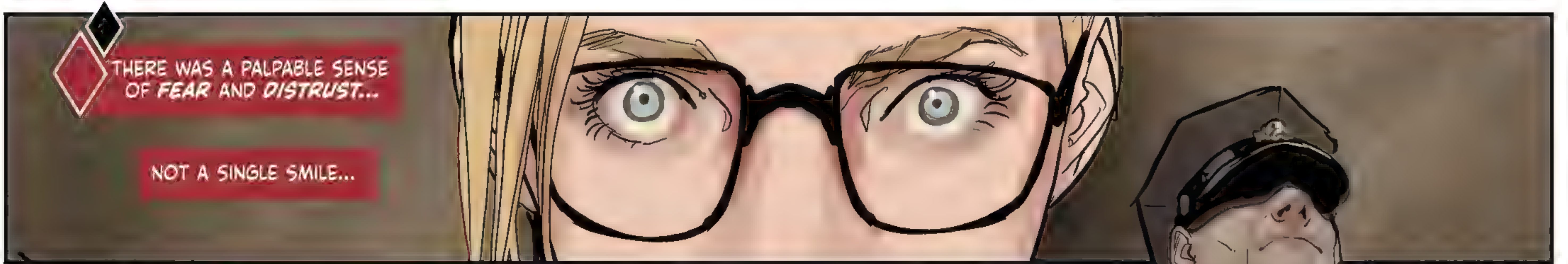
SO I DID JUST THAT.
I SAT AND I WAITED.

I WAITED FOR HOURS.



BEING WITH THE CENTER FOR STUDY
OF CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY, HANGING
AROUND IN POLICE STATIONS WASN'T
ANYTHING NEW FOR ME.

THAT UNEASY FEELING,
HOWEVER...THAT WAS NEW.



THERE WAS A PALPABLE SENSE
OF *FEAR* AND *DISTRUST*...

NOT A SINGLE SMILE...



BECAUSE ALL OF
THEM KNEW IT...

...THE UNPLEASANT TRUTH THAT ANY
ONE OF THEIR COMRADES-IN-ARMS
COULD BE ONE OF *THEM*...

AN EXECUTIONER.

AND THE LONGER I WAITED,
THE HEAVIER THAT VERY IDEA
FELT...



DOCTOR!

BWAH!



COME
ON! HE'S
WAITING!



SO, UH...IS
THERE SOME KIND OF...
PROTOCOL TO MEETING
HIM?

HE'S THE
BATMAN, NOT THE
FUCKING QUEEN OF
ENGLAND.



JUST...BE *CAREFUL*
WITH YOUR
QUESTIONS.

THE MAN
DRESSES AS A
BAT AND FIGHTS
CRIME.

I DON'T
THINK HE'S OVERLY
INTERESTED IN BEING
PSYCHOANALYZED
IS WHAT I'M
SAYING.

A WAVE OF PANIC WASHES OVER ME AS I THINK, *WHAT IF HE RECOGNIZES ME?*

BEING THE DOCTOR OF THE MAN WHO HELD YOU AT GUNPOINT IS TROUBLESOME ENOUGH...

...NOT *TELLING ANYONE* ABOUT IT WHILE CONDUCTING A STUDY ON THAT SAME MAN IS A PROBLEM.

GORDON.
NEW
DETECTIVE?

NO. A SHRINK.
DR. HARLEEN
QUINZEL.

MAYBE, UNLIKE MR. JAY, BATMAN NEVER TOOK A GOOD LOOK AT MY FACE THAT NIGHT...

...I HOPE?

FROM
ARKHAM?

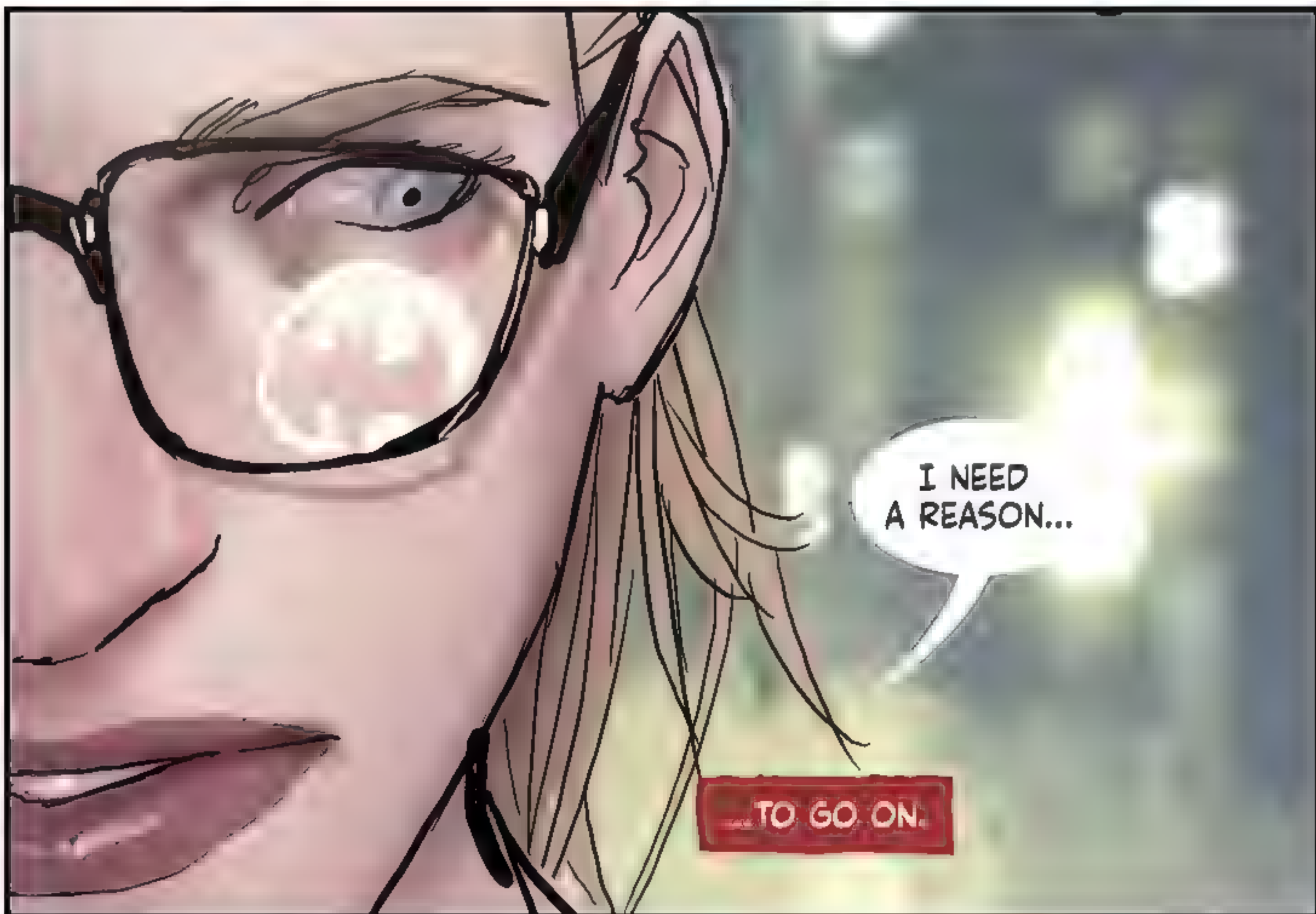
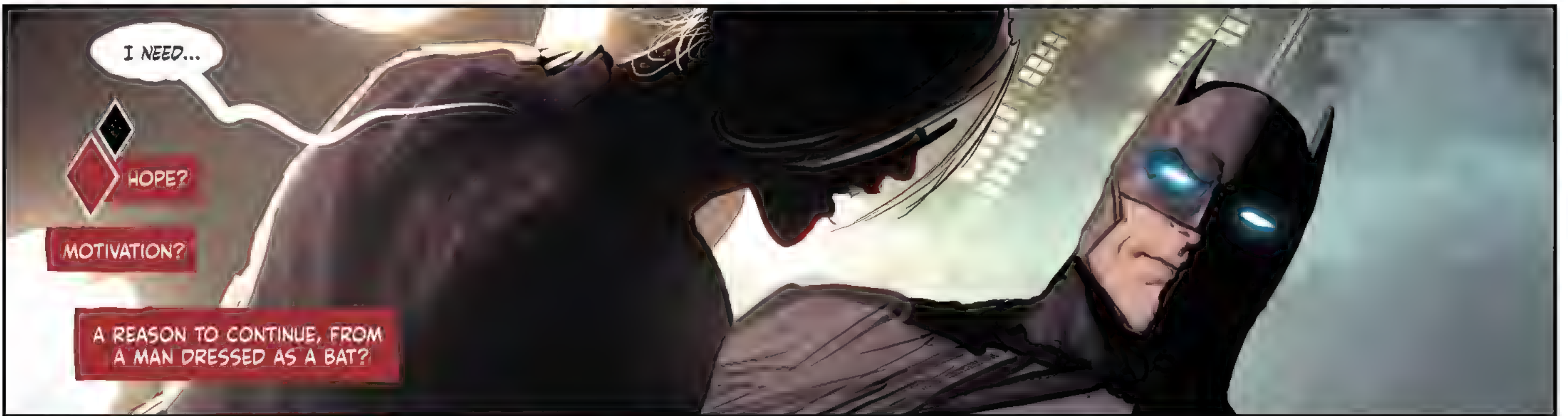
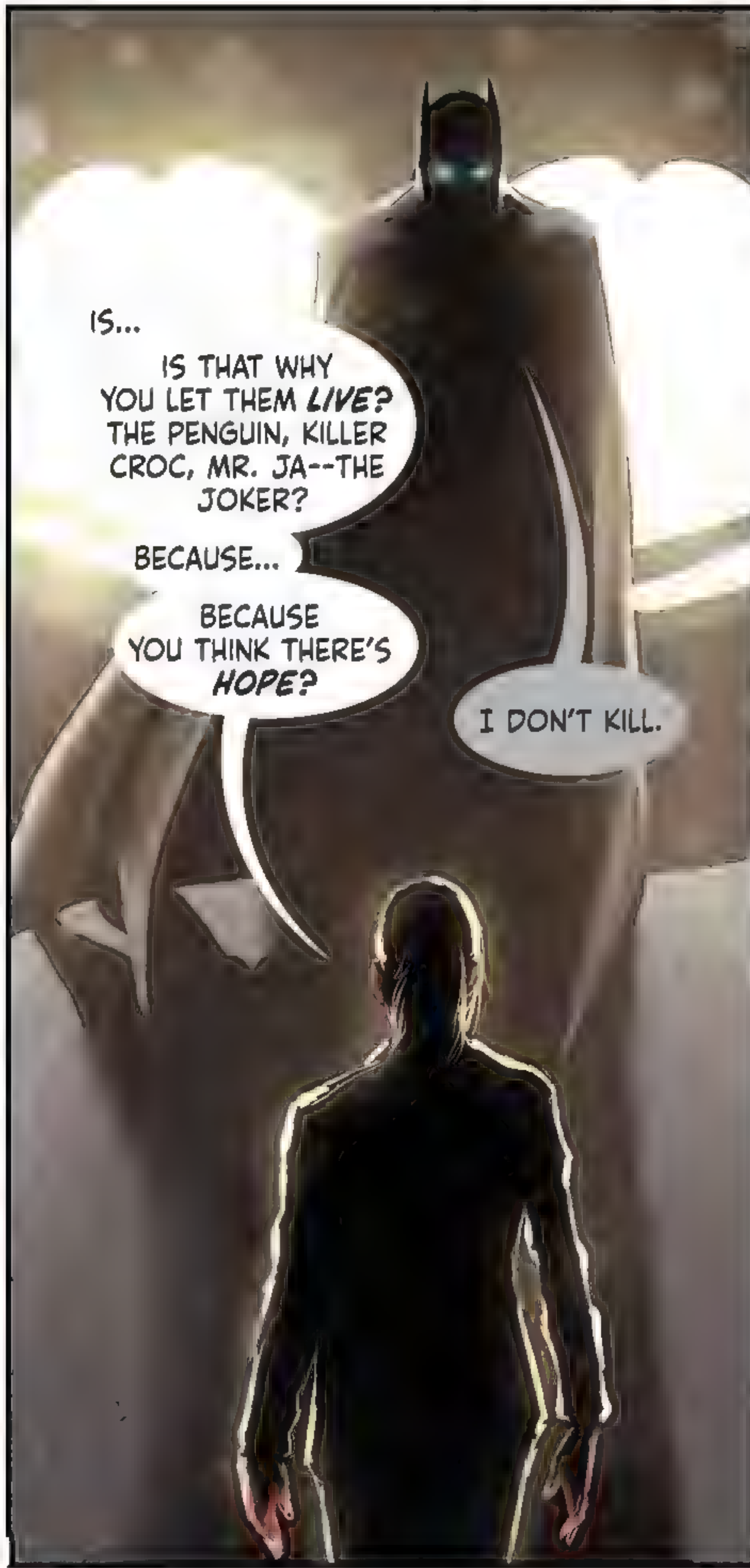
YES,
BUT HOW DID
YOU--

THE GOOD
DOCTOR HERE
WANTED TO ASK YOU
SOMETHING.
GO ON!

I'D WAITED FOR HOURS. NOW I WAS
FINALLY ASKING HIM THE QUESTION.

IT WAS A SIMPLE QUESTION, AND I NEEDED *HIS* ANSWER. I NEEDED IT BECAUSE HE IS THE *CRUCIAL* PIECE OF THE MASSIVE PUZZLE THAT IS GOTHAM.

DO YOU
THINK THEY CAN
BE HELPED?





...
SO YOU
BELIEVE THERE
IS *HOPE* FOR
THEM?

I *HOPE*
THERE IS.

EVEN
JOKER?

DO I
THINK *HE* CAN
BE HELPED?

MANY HAVE
TRIED.



I'M SORRY,
DOCTOR, I HAVE OTHER
BUSINESS HERE.



AS THEIR CONVERSATION DROWNED IN THE
SOUNDS OF THE CITY, I CONSIDERED ALL I
HAD SEEN AND HEARD THAT NIGHT AND FELT AN
IRRESISTIBLE DESIRE TO RETURN TO ARKHAM.

BECAUSE, IN ALL HONESTY,
AT THAT MOMENT...

IT SEEMED LIKE A MORE
SANE PLACE TO BE.

ARKHAM ASYLUM

Three Days Later



YOU'RE LATE!

ROUGH NIGHT.

ANYHOW, I THOUGHT YOU WERE THE CHIEF OF SECURITY, NOT THE HALL MONITOR, MR. BRONSON!

MHM.

COFFEE MACHINE IS OUT, BY THE WAY. I HAD SIMMONS DO A COFFEE RUN AND I INCLUDED YOU. IT'S A BIT COLD BUT IT SHOULD DO.

AW, THANKS.

YUP. THAT'LL BE **TWO BUCKS** IN THE COOKIE JAR.

ALSO, DOC... JUST DON'T **OVERDO IT**, OKAY?

GOTHAM DAILY
EXECUTIONERS

OVERDO WHAT?



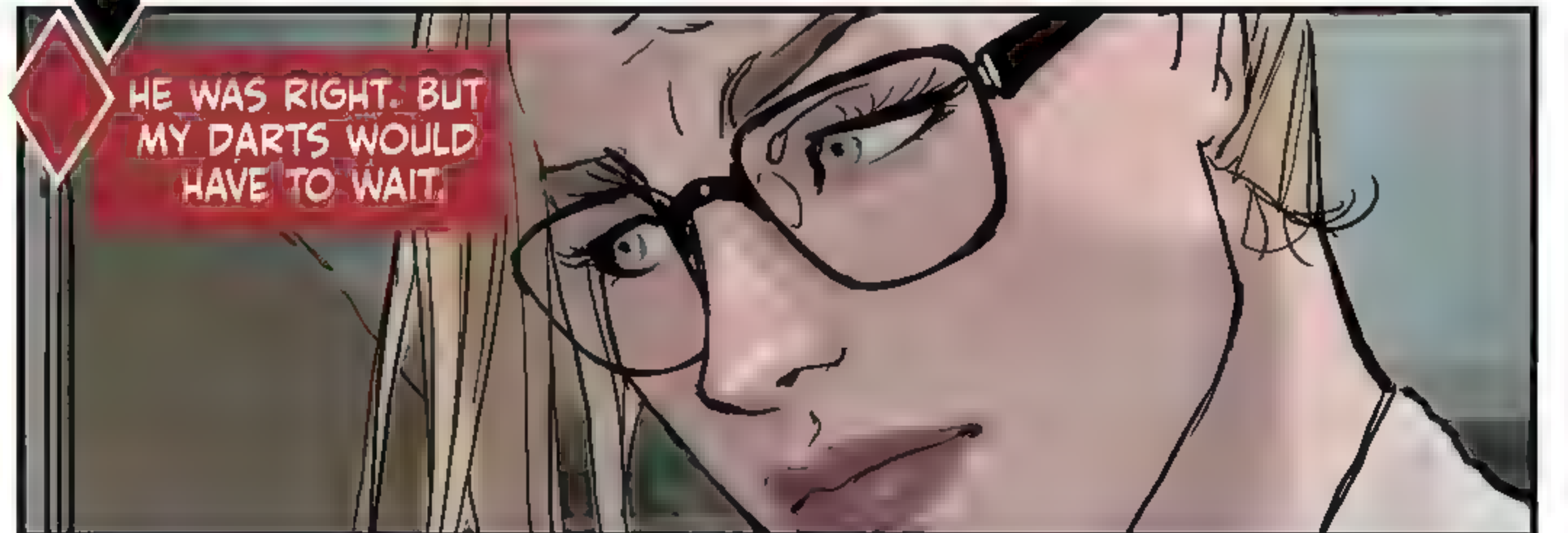
I'VE ALWAYS HAD A SENSITIVE NOSE FOR BULLSHIT AND OTHER THINGS...

ONE OF THOSE THINGS BEING THE SMELL OF ALCOHOL SWEAT...



REMEMBER WHEN I TOLD YOU I COPE WITH THIS PLACE THROUGH WHISKEY AND DARTS?

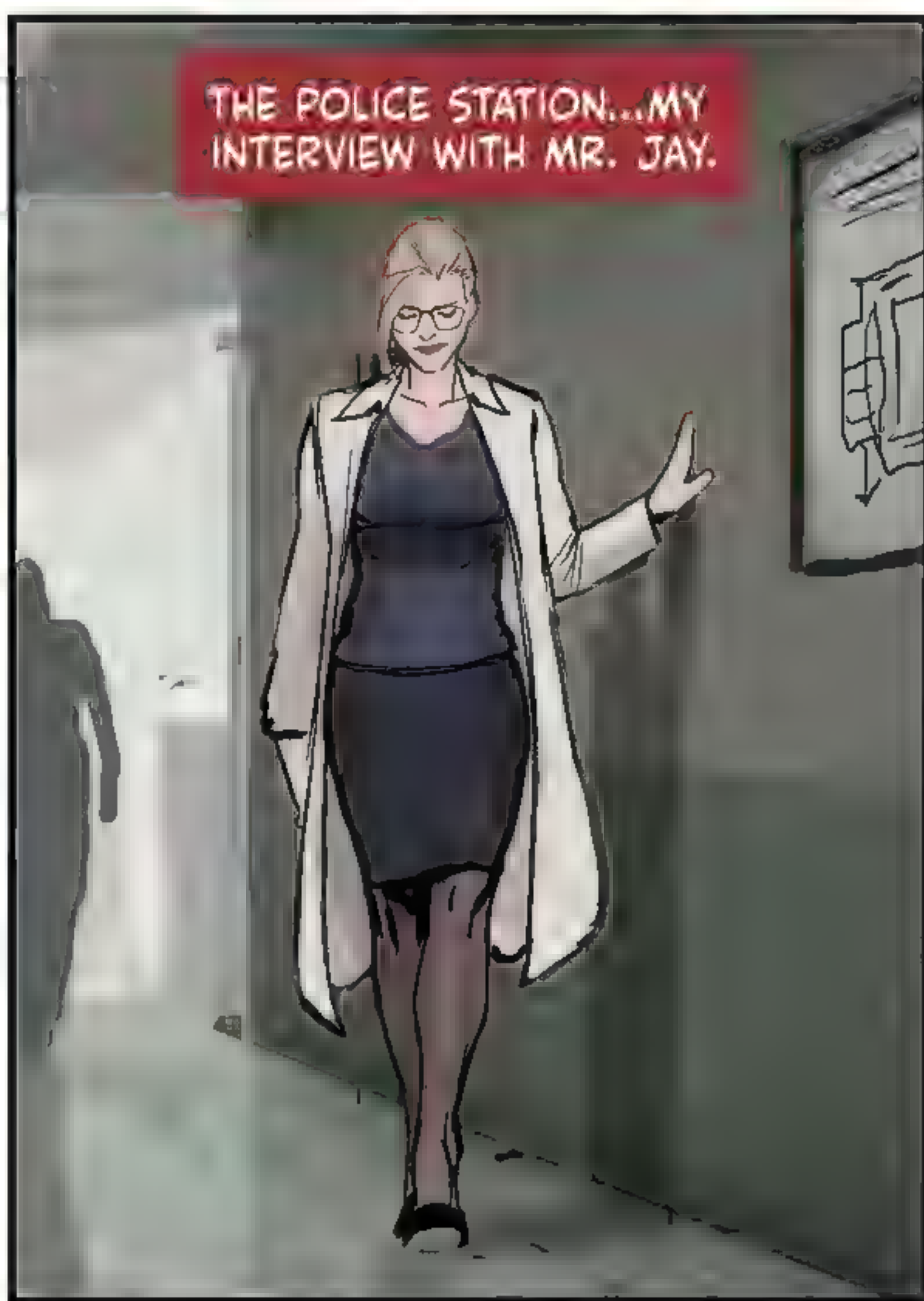
YOU MAY WANT TO FIND YOUR *DARTS*, DOC.



HE WAS RIGHT. BUT MY DARTS WOULD HAVE TO WAIT.



I HAD THREE DAYS TO PUT MY THOUGHTS IN ORDER, TO PROCESS EVERYTHING.



THE POLICE STATION...MY INTERVIEW WITH MR. JAY.



MY OWN IMPATIENCE AND FRUSTRATION WITH IT ALL...



IT WASN'T LIKELY THAT HE'D JUST TELL ME ABOUT THE MOMENT HE SHED HIS OWN MASK AND HOWLED AT THE MOON WITH ALL THE OTHER MONSTERS.



SO I WOULD HAVE TO TAKE MY TIME!

I WOULD HAVE TO DO WHAT A PSYCHIATRIST DOES BEST.

LISTEN.

MR. JAY, I'M HERE TO CONTINUE OUR CONVERSATION.

AH, DR. QUINN... SOMETHING?

IS QUINN OKAY? YOUR NAME IS A BIT OF A TONGUE TWISTER.

EH, I'VE HEARD WORSE. IT'S FINE.

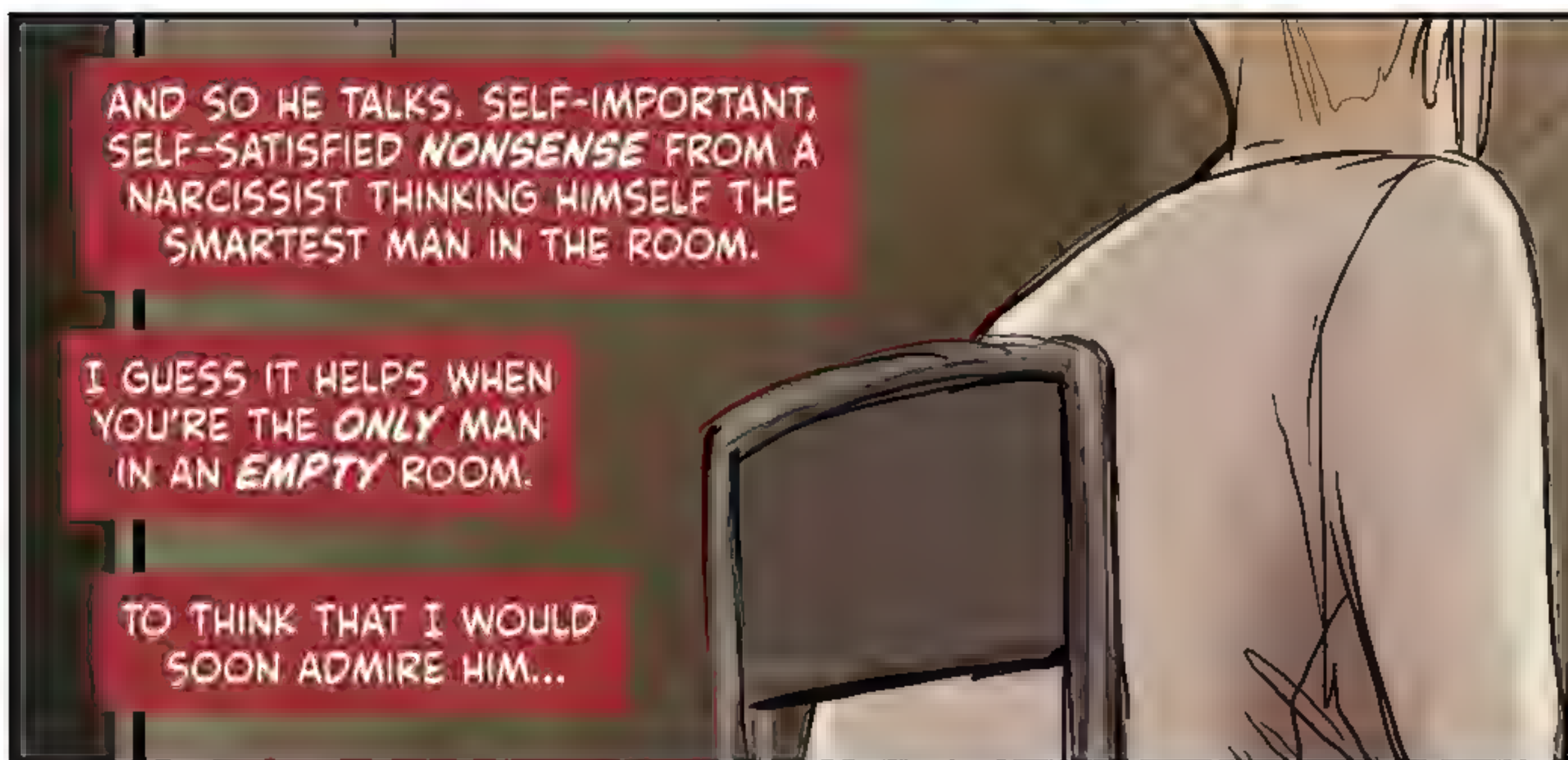


BY ALL MEANS, SIT.
WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW?



WELL...I WOULD LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR VIEW OF GOTHAM AS A CITY OF MONSTERS. PARTICULARLY HOW THIS RELATES TO THE *RULE OF LAW*.

I WILL LET HIM TAKE ME ON A JOURNEY. I WILL LET HIM WEAR HIMSELF OUT...I WILL LET HIM *TALK*.



AND SO HE TALKS. SELF-IMPORTANT, SELF-SATISFIED *NONSENSE* FROM A NARCISSIST THINKING HIMSELF THE SMARTEST MAN IN THE ROOM.

I GUESS IT HELPS WHEN YOU'RE THE *ONLY* MAN IN AN *EMPTY* ROOM.

TO THINK THAT I WOULD SOON ADMIRE HIM...



SEE, IN THE AGE OF METAHUMANS, THE NOTION OF PEOPLE IMPOSING LAW AND ORDER IS DOWNRIGHT *HILARIOUS*. AND THEN YOU HAVE THE *BATMAN*.



WHAT ABOUT HIM?

WELL, THINK ABOUT IT. DEEP DOWN, ALL THE GOTHAM COPS KNOW THEY'RE FIGHTING A LOSING BATTLE. SOME OF MY ROOMMATES HERE IN ARKHAM PACK SO MUCH POWER THEY COULD TAKE ON AN *ARMY*.



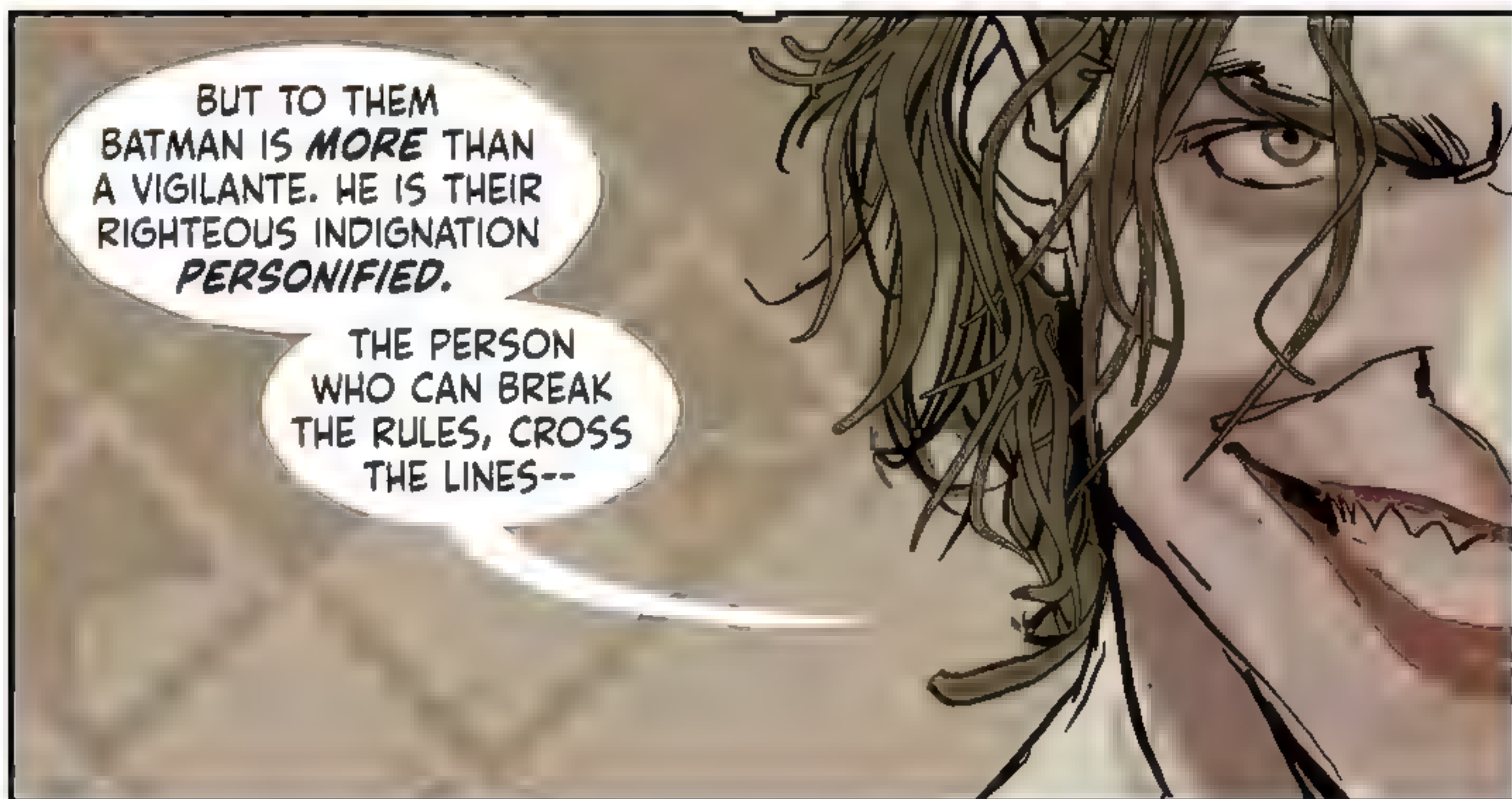
SO THE COPS *COMPROMISE*. THEY MOUNT A CRY FOR HELP AT THE TOP OF POLICE HEADQUARTERS. A SIGNAL FOR THEIR *AVATAR OF JUSTICE*. OH THEY MAY NOT SAY IT, BUT THEY DO SEE HIM AS THAT.

A MAN WHO *DOES* WHAT THEY WISH THEY COULD: BUSTS IN, BREAKS BONES, TAKES DOWN THE *BAD GUYS*...



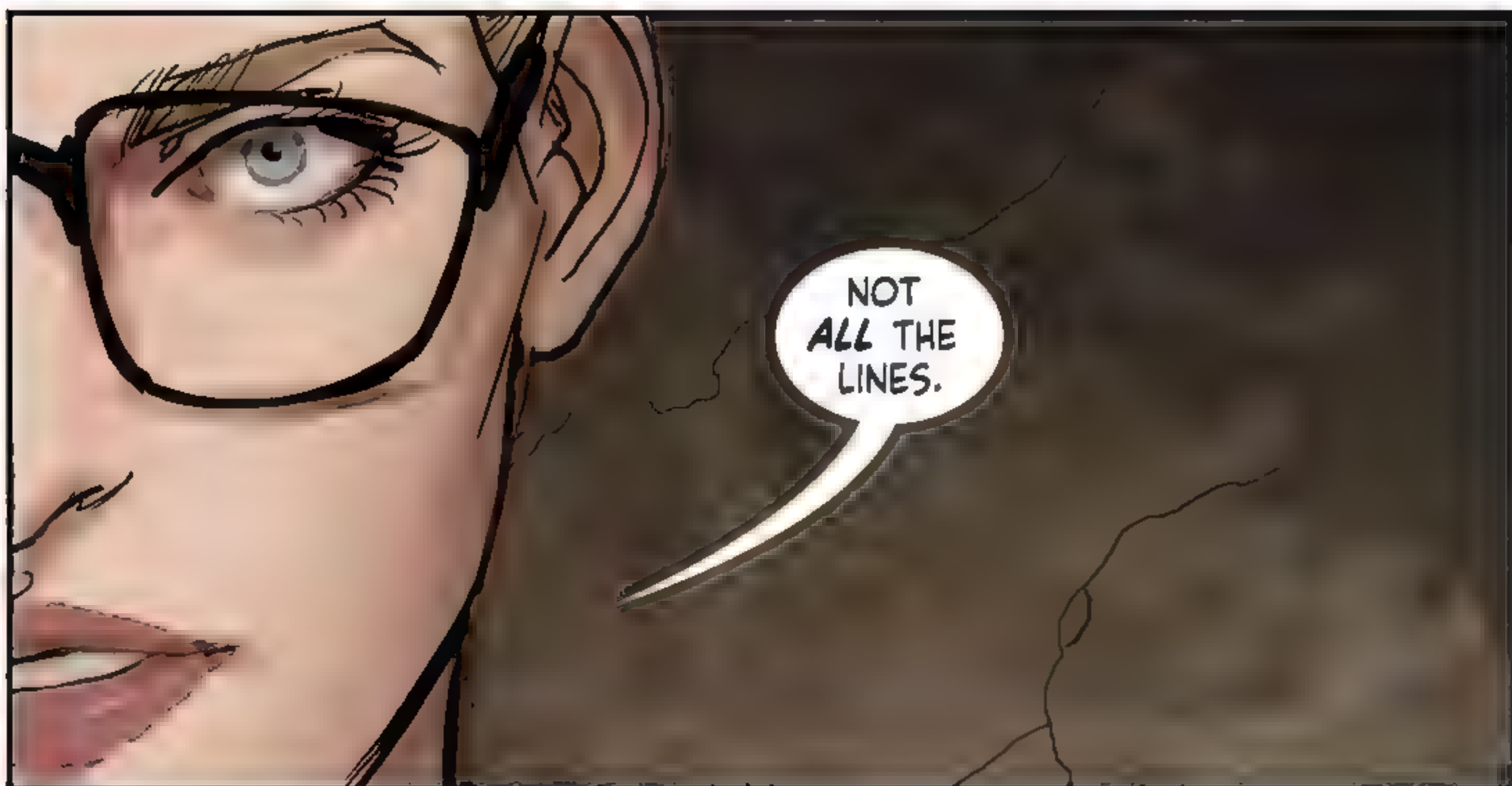
THE POLICE HAVE NEVER OFFICIALLY *CONDONED*--

VIGILANTES, YES, I KNOW, DOCTOR.

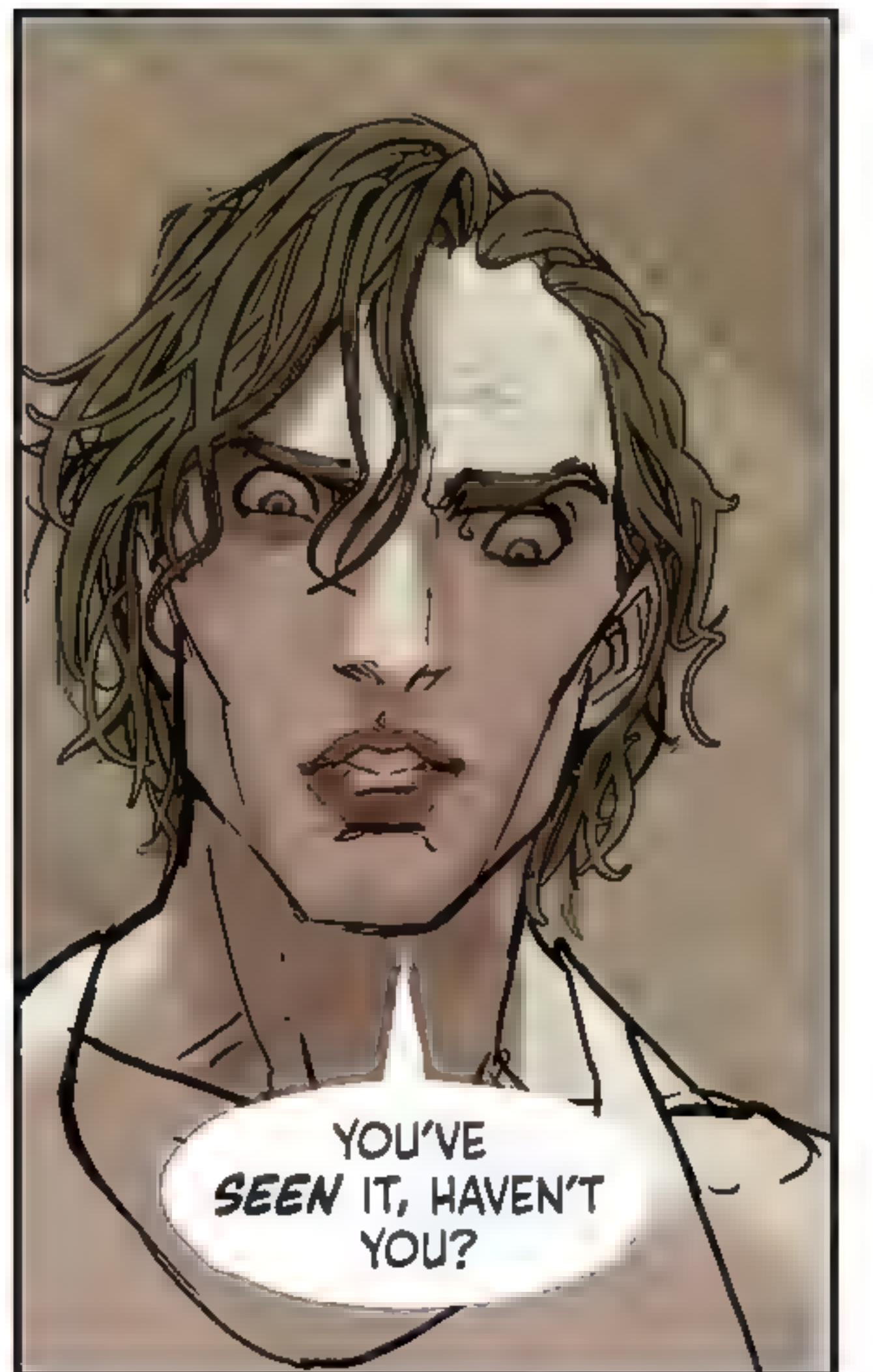
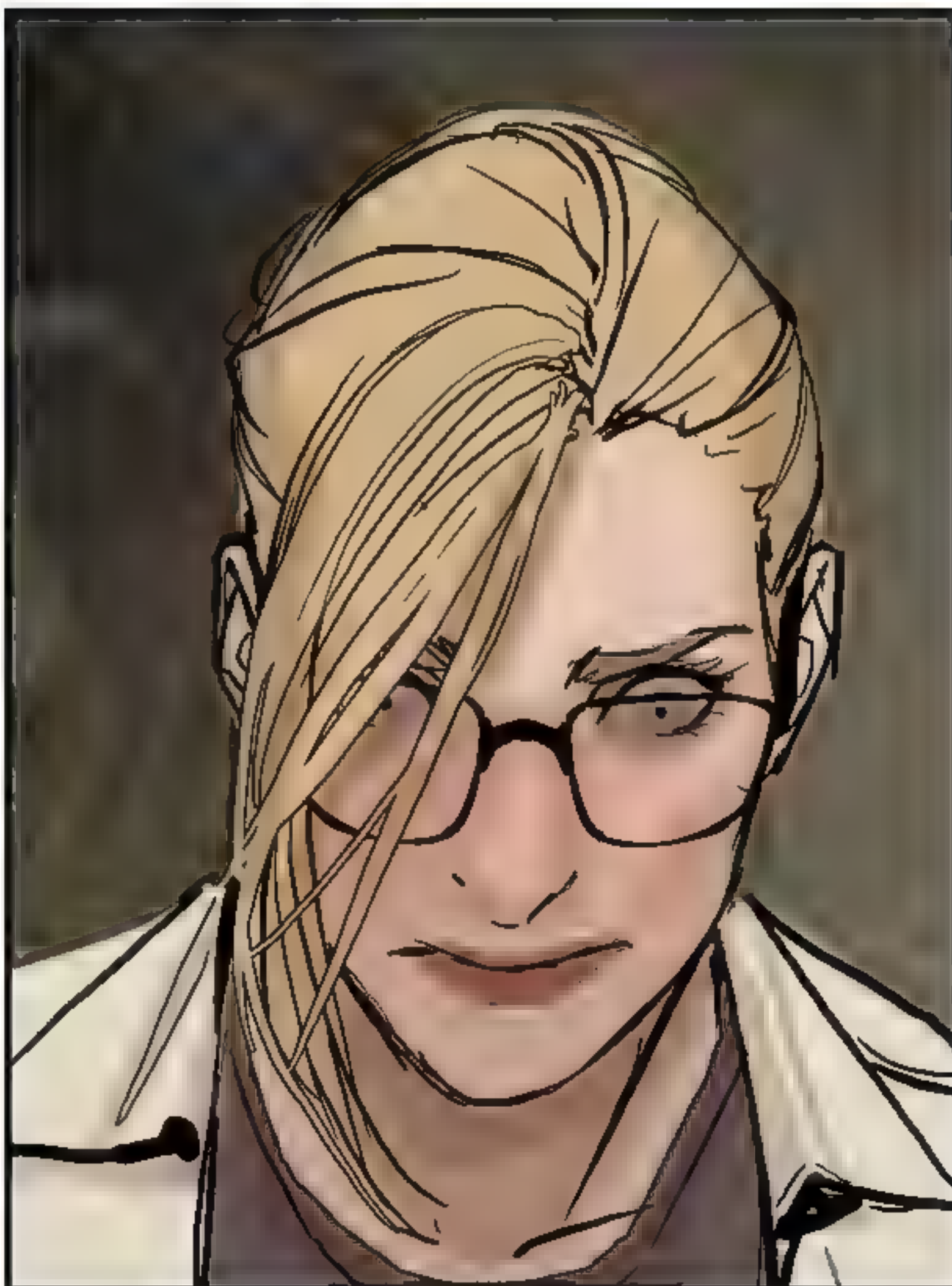
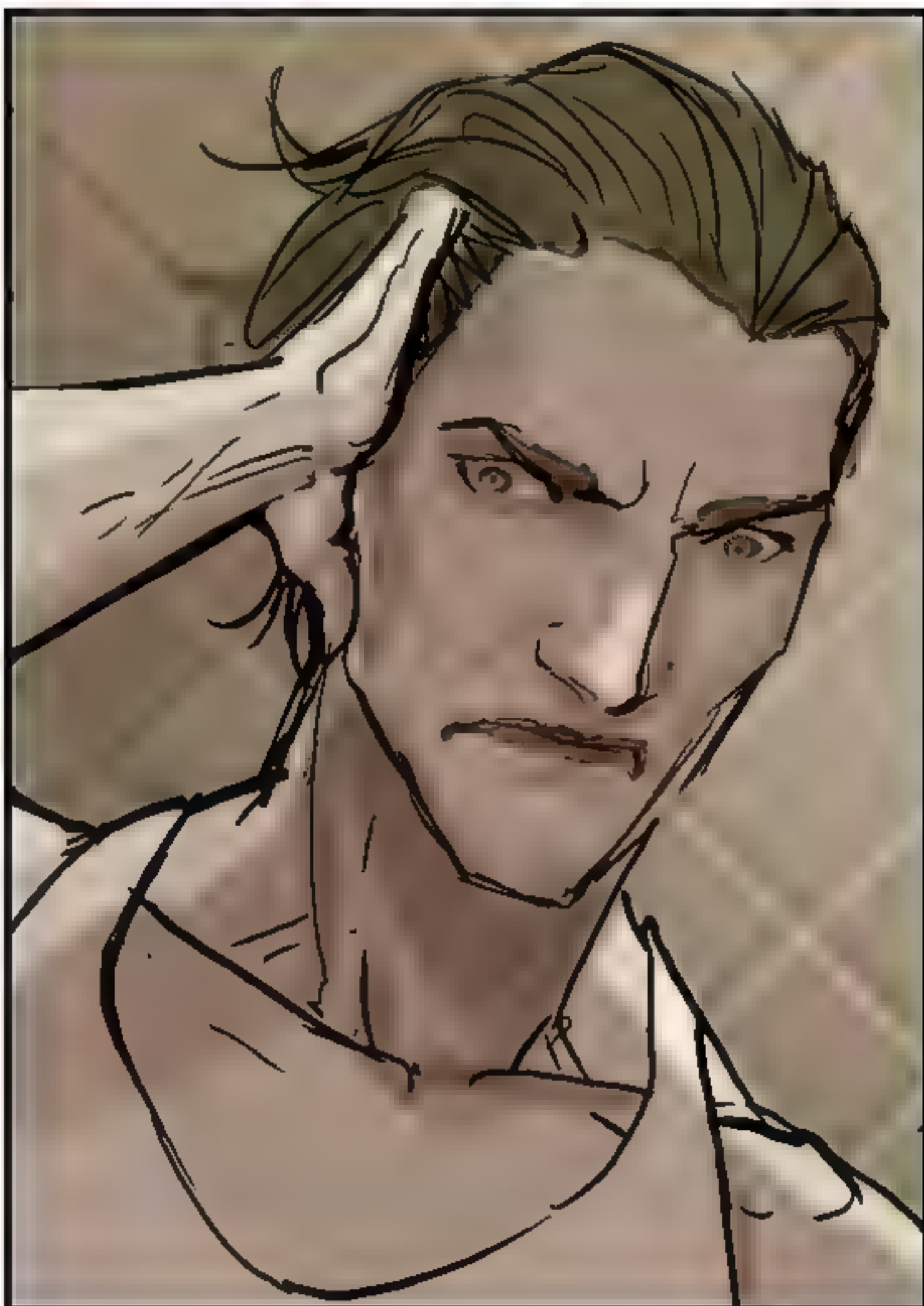
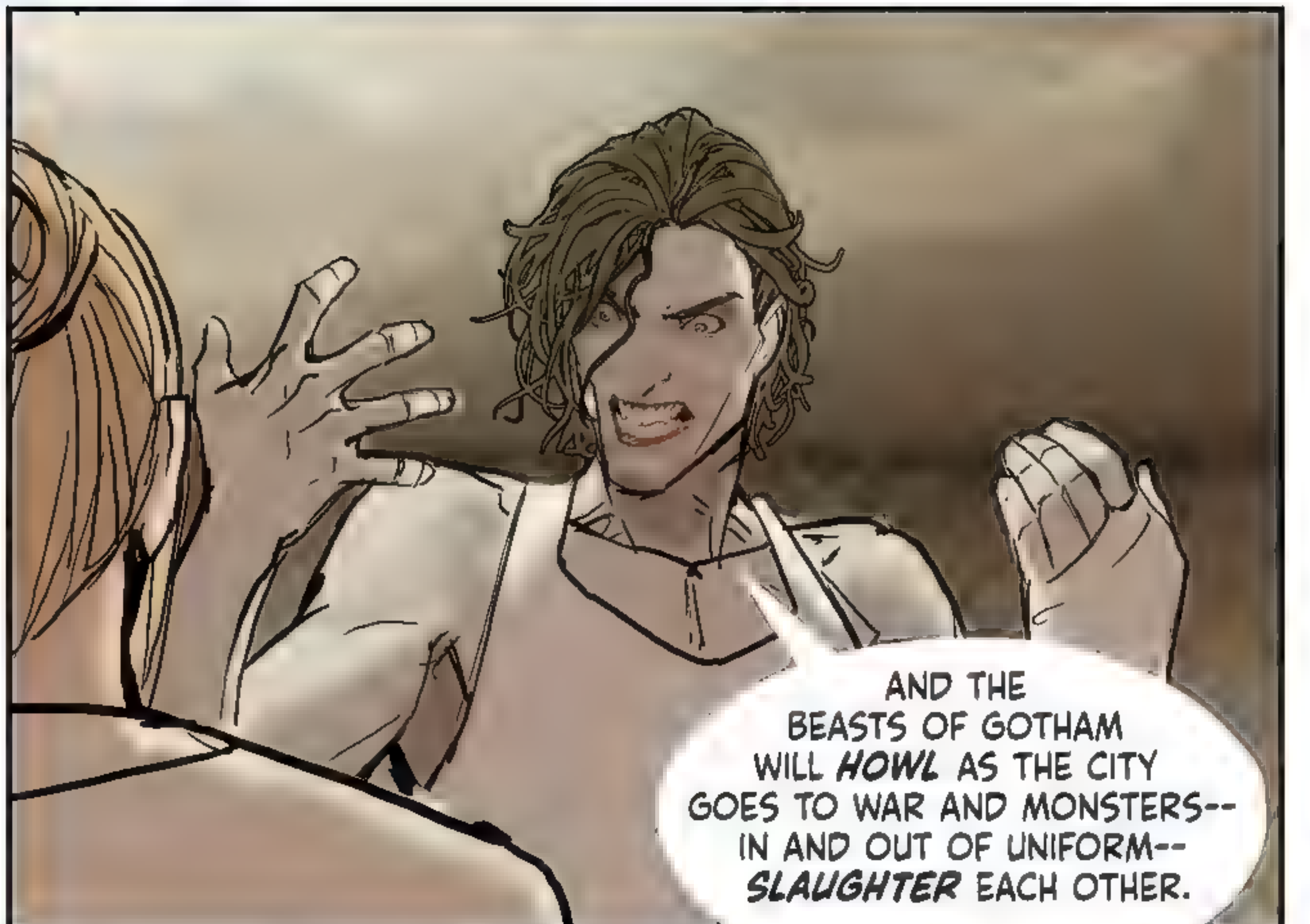
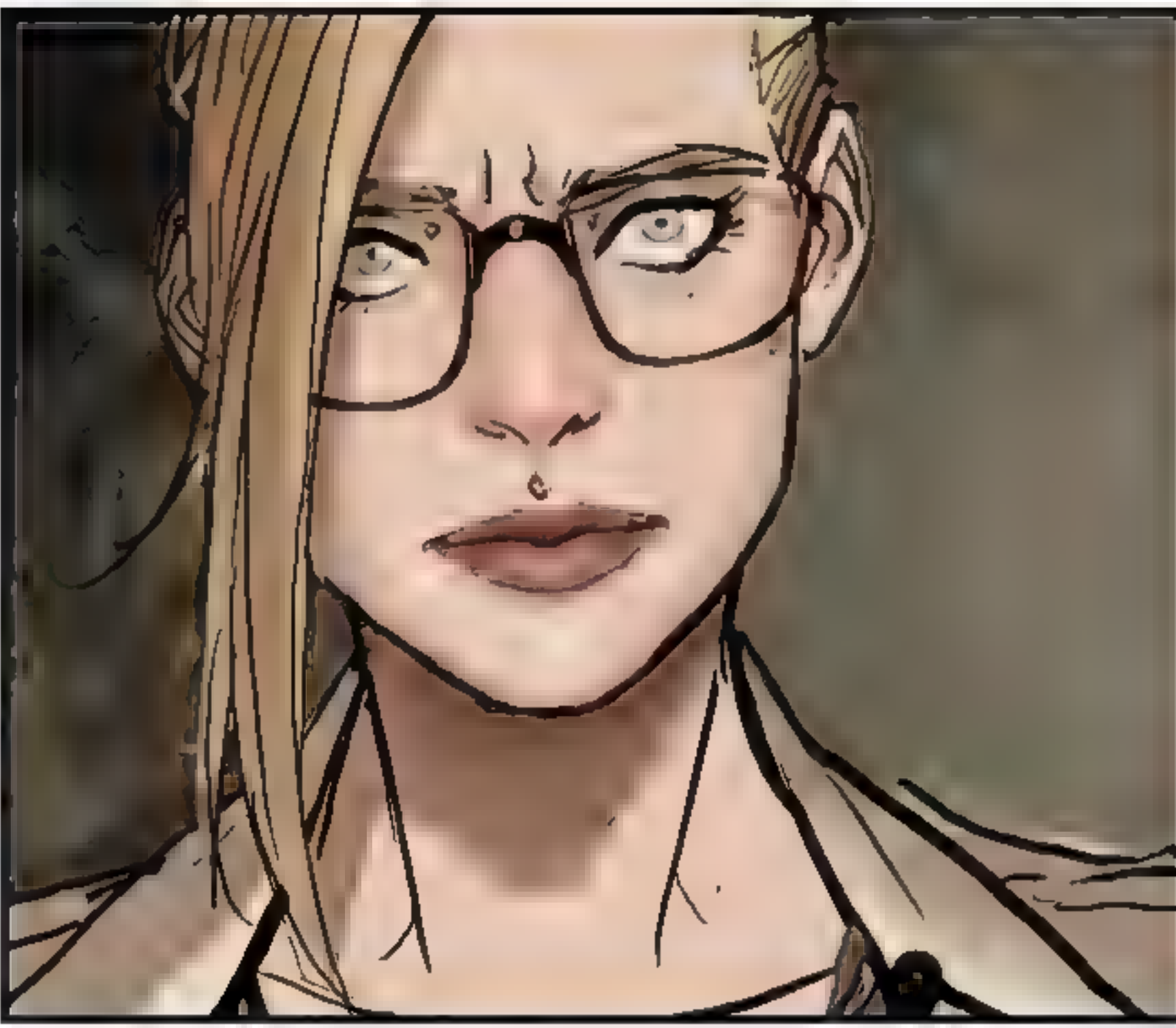
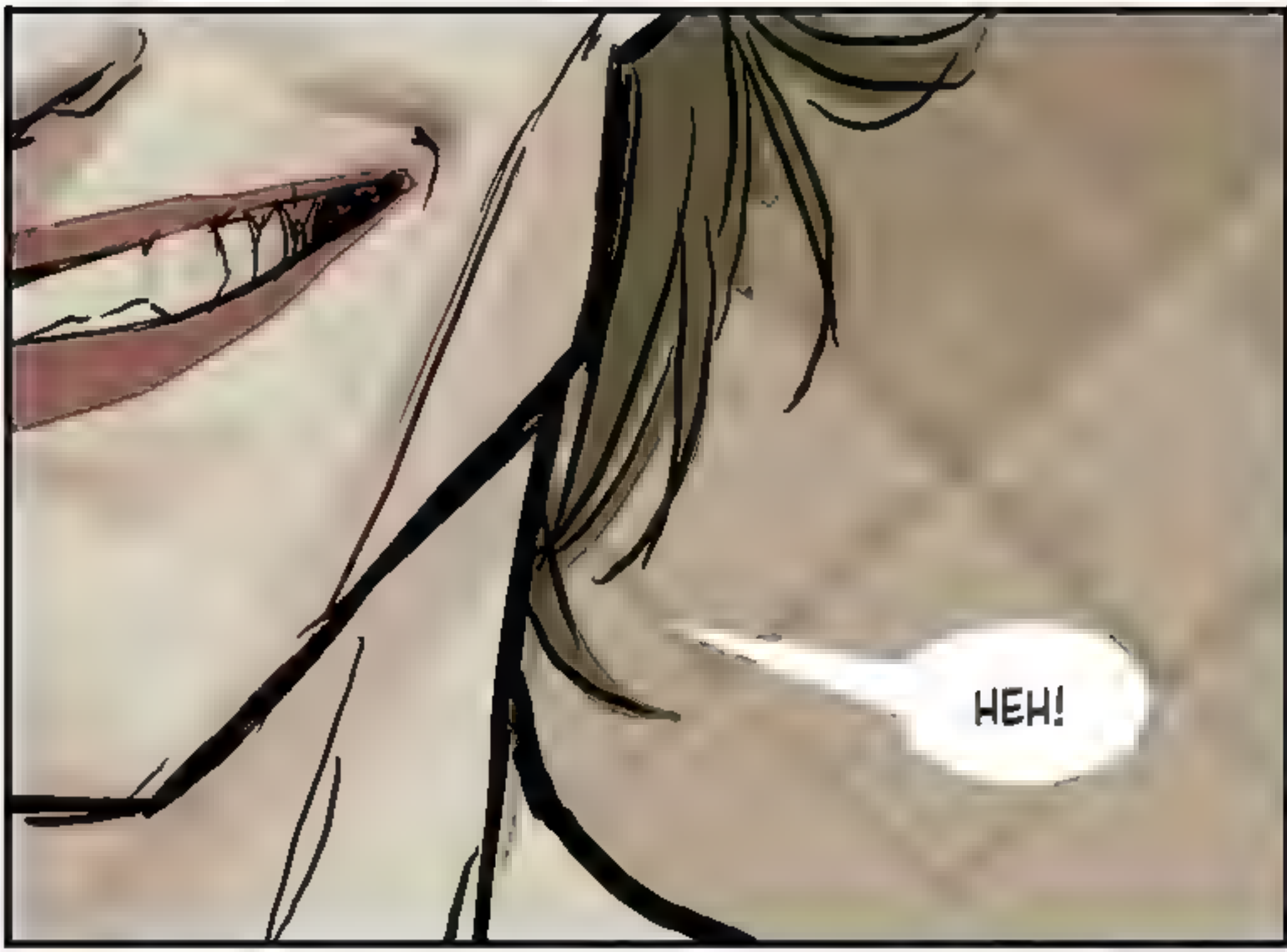


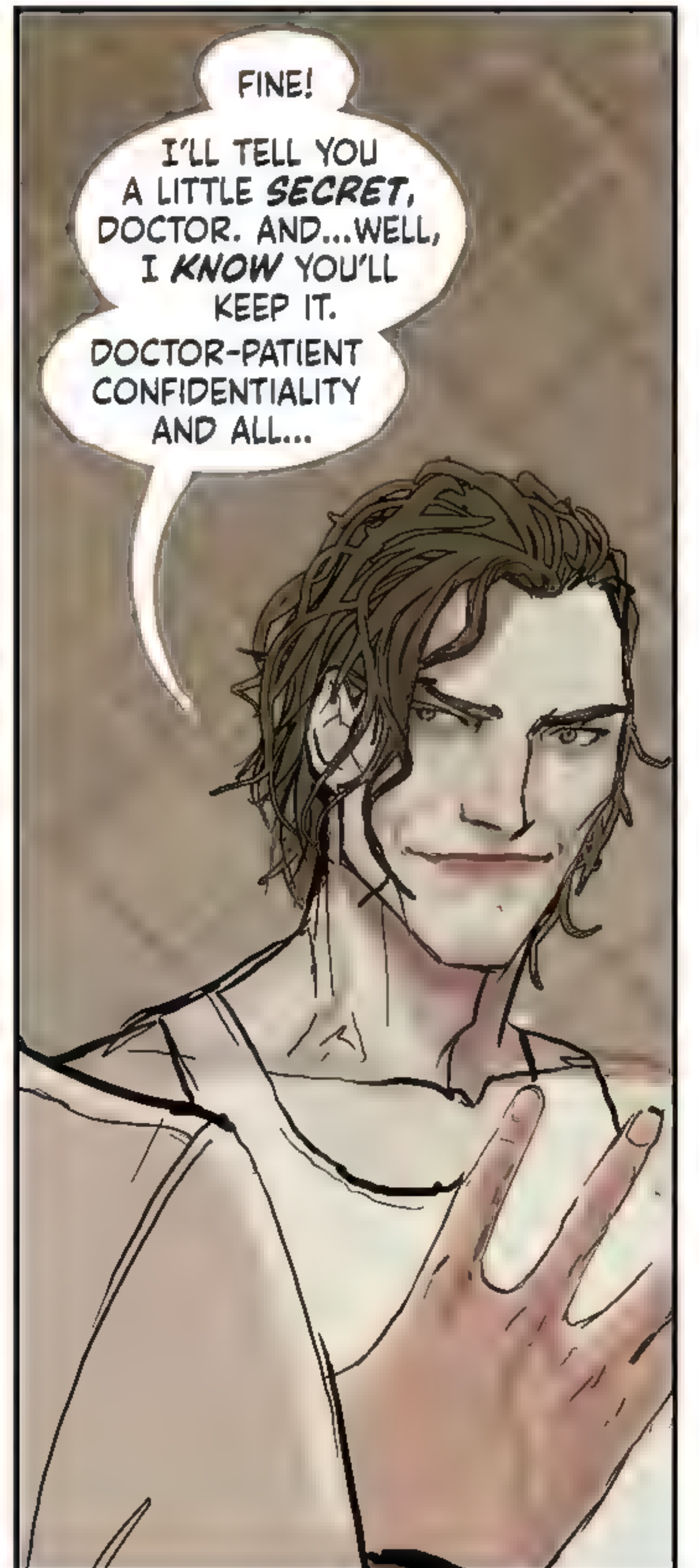
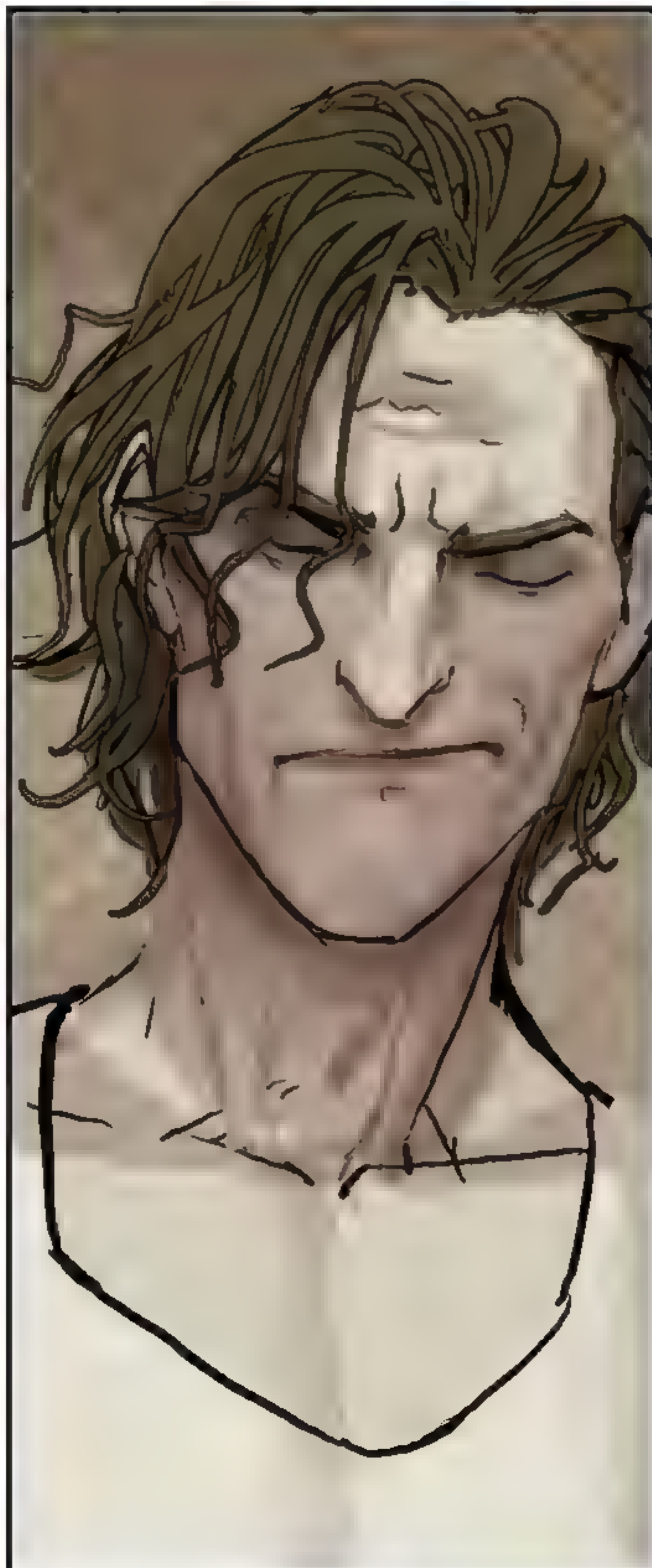
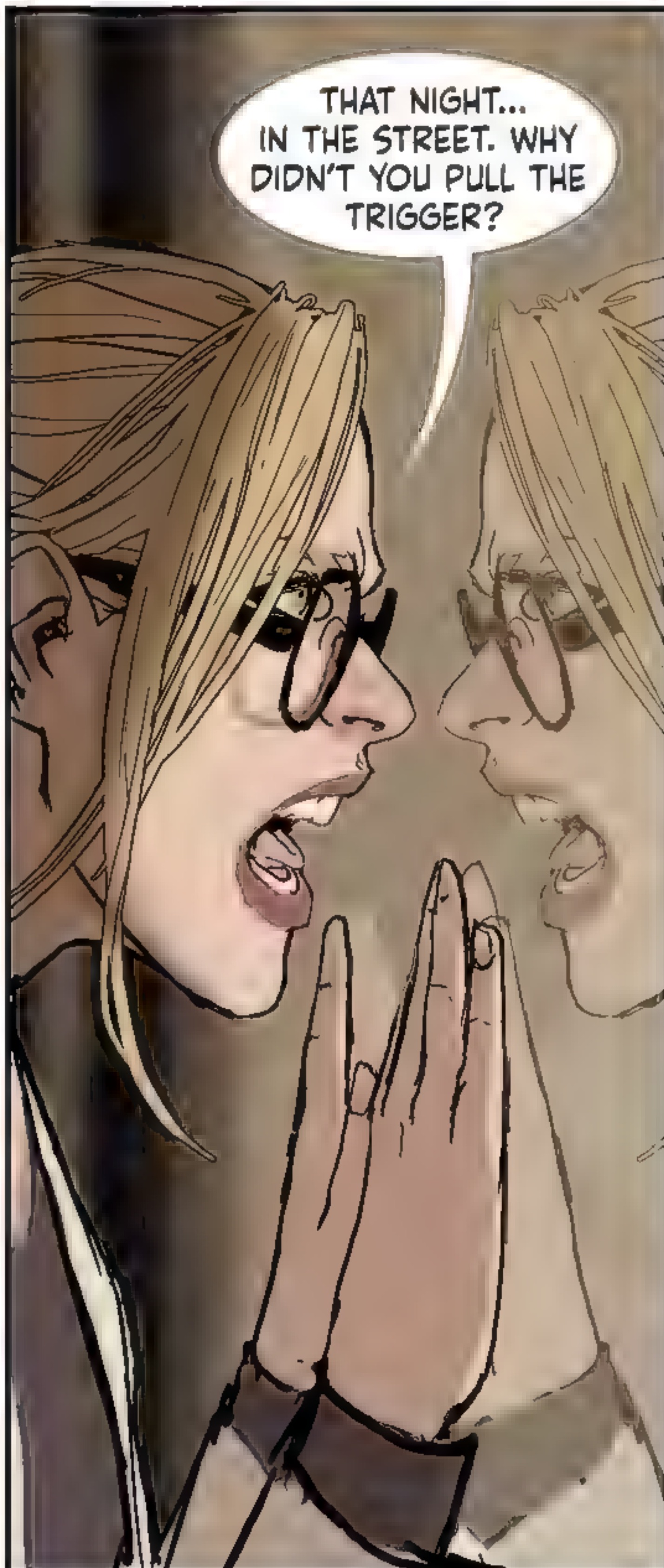
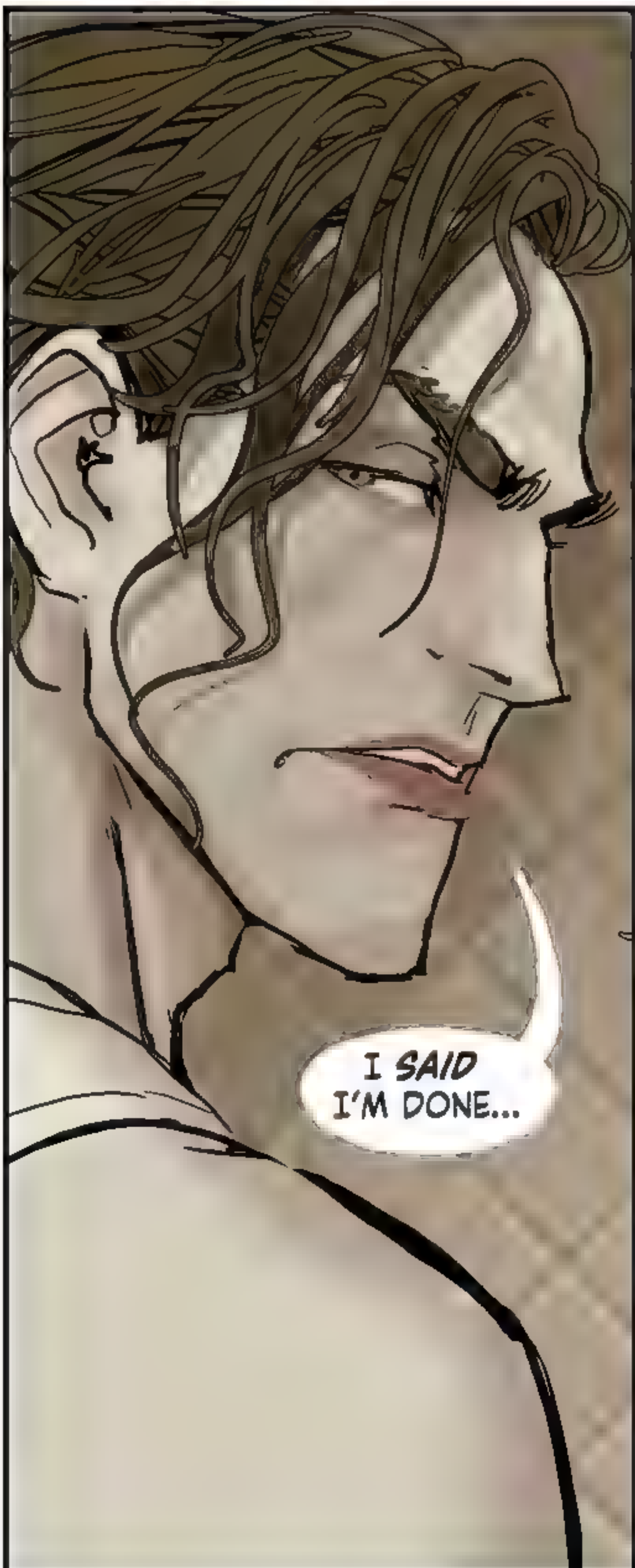
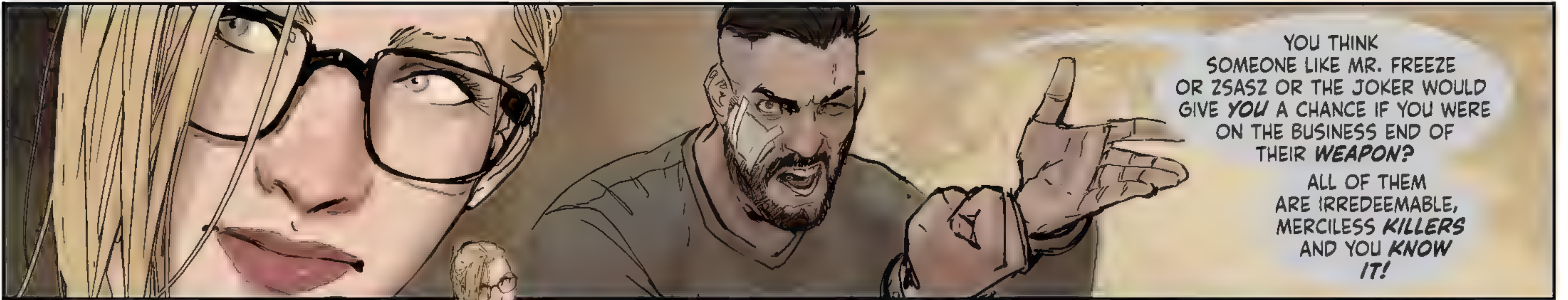
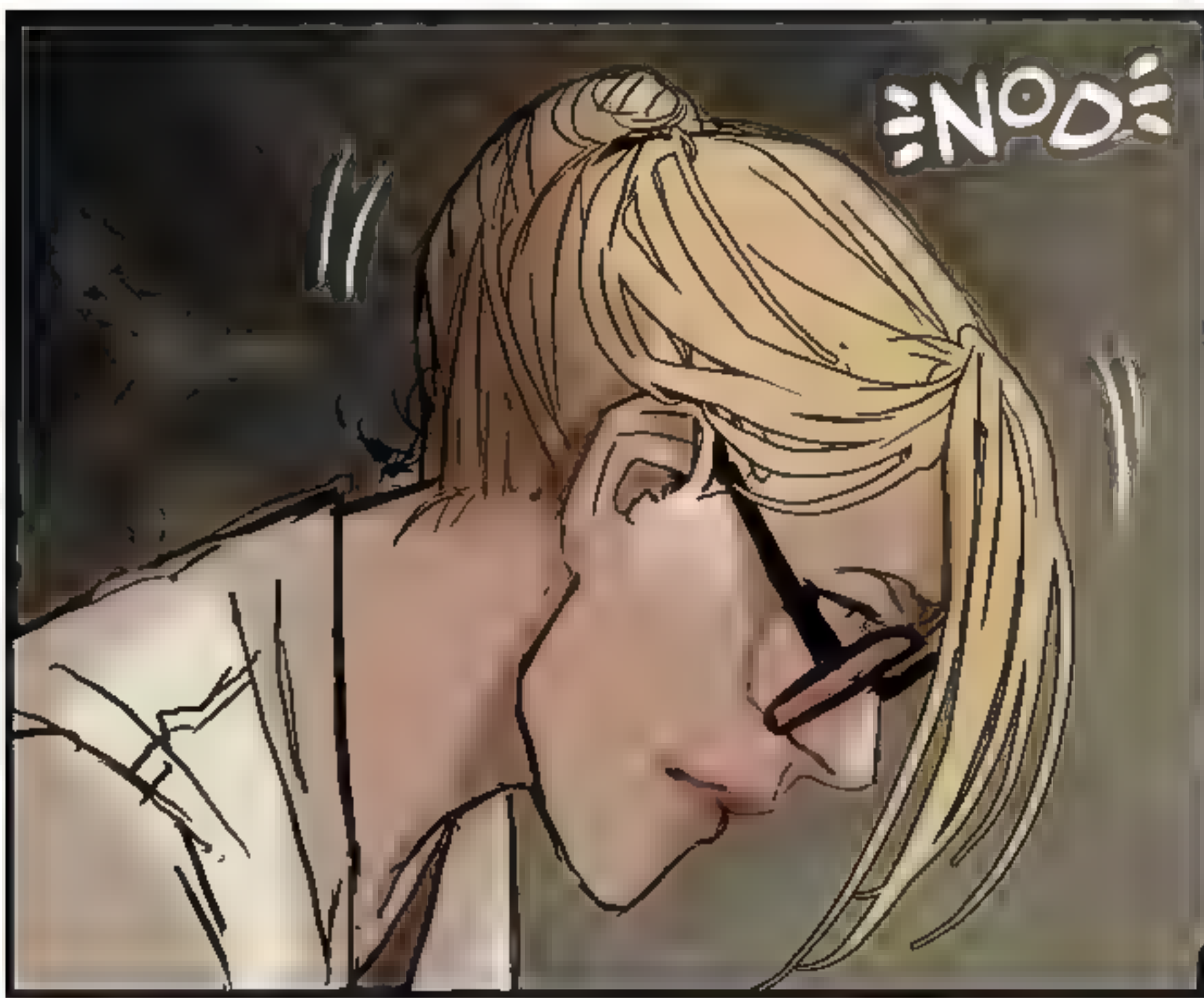
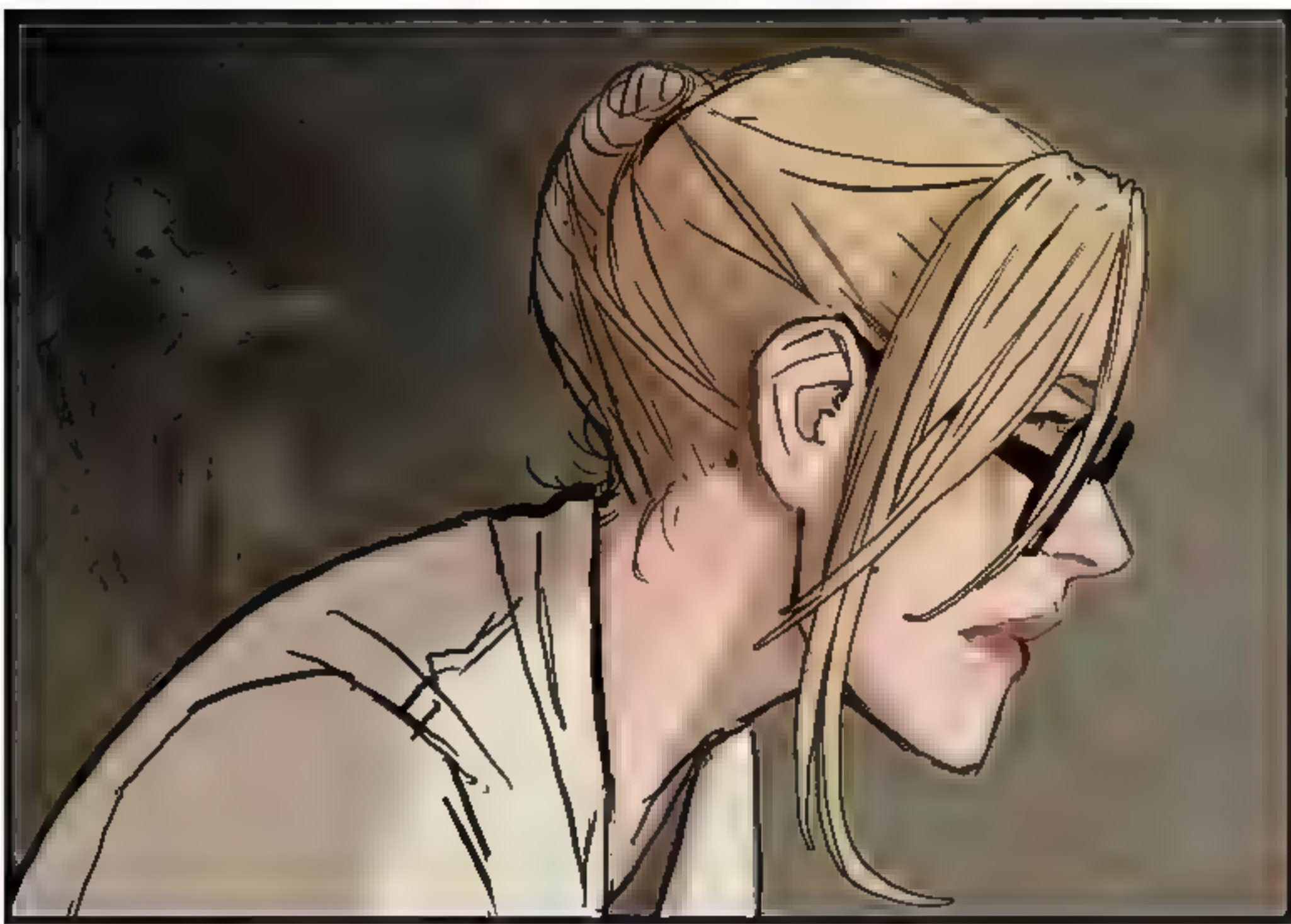
BUT TO THEM BATMAN IS *MORE* THAN A VIGILANTE. HE IS THEIR RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION *PERSONIFIED*.

THE PERSON WHO CAN BREAK THE RULES, CROSS THE LINES--



NOT *ALL* THE LINES.



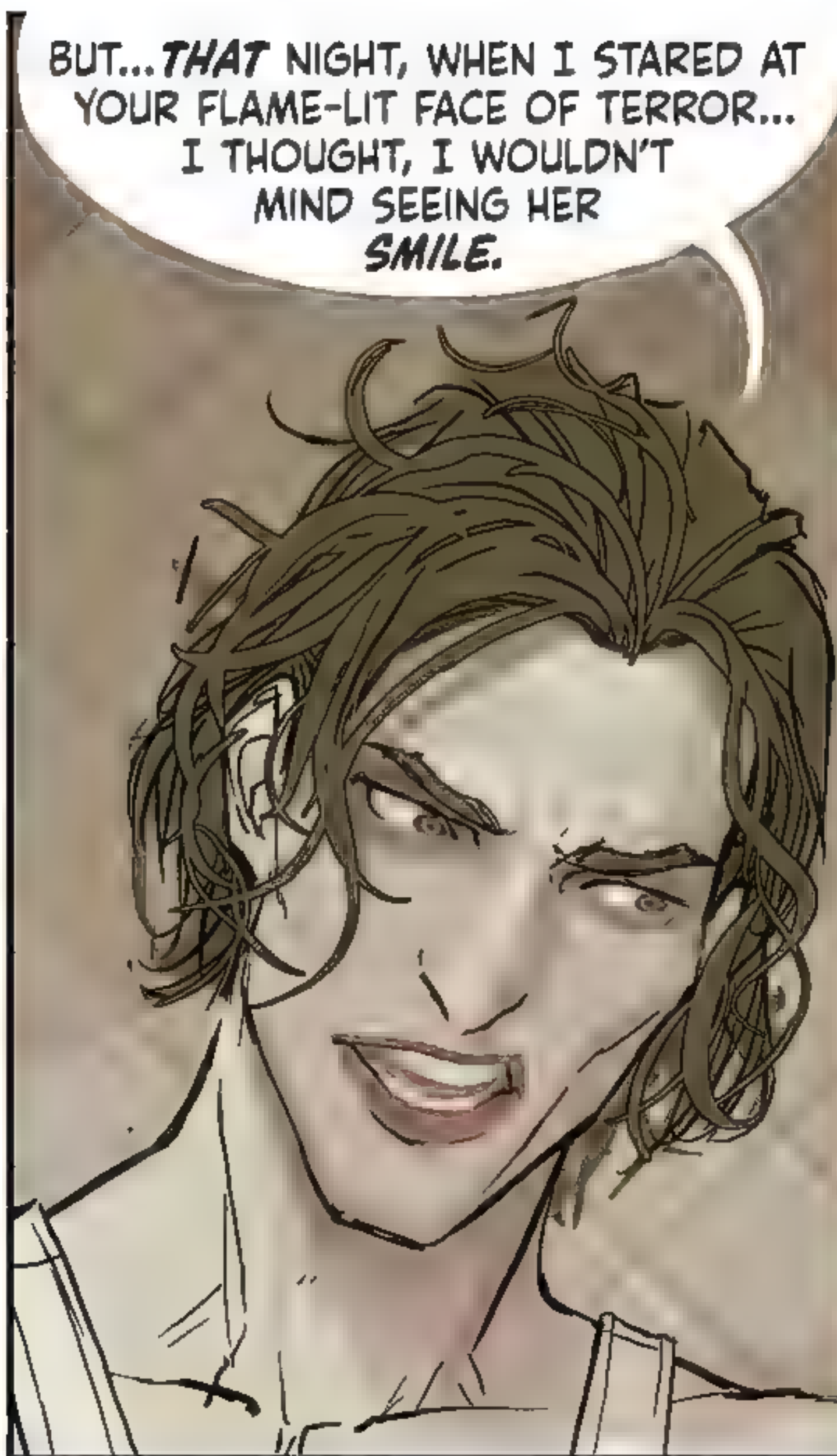




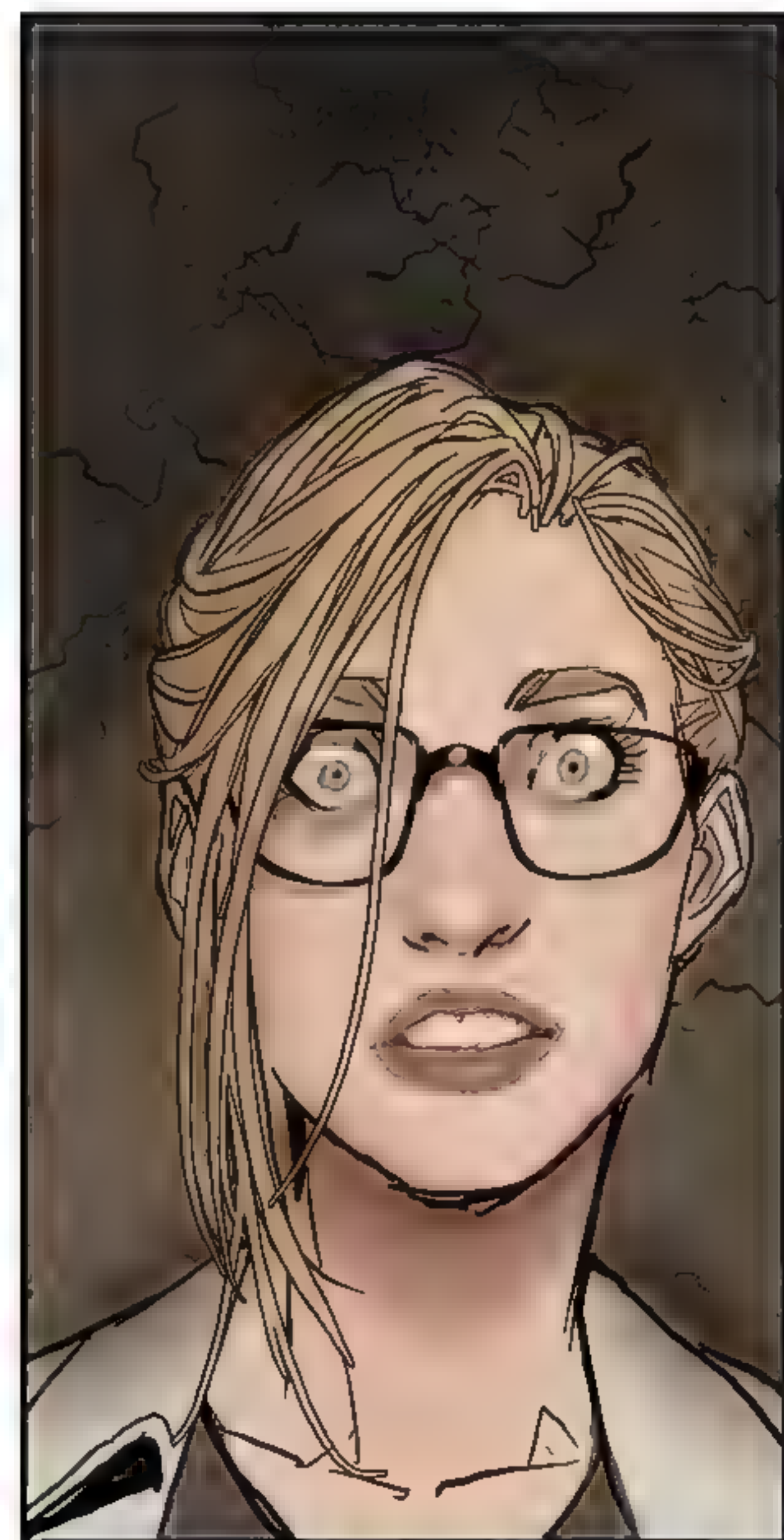
SEE, THERE ARE TWO EXPRESSIONS I LOVE SEEING ON PEOPLE'S FACES ABOVE ANYTHING ELSE. **ABJECT HORROR** AND AN **HONEST SMILE**.



YOU'LL UNDERSTAND, THE TWO RARELY CROSS PATHS.



BUT...*THAT* NIGHT, WHEN I STARED AT YOUR FLAME-LIT FACE OF TERROR... I THOUGHT, I WOULDN'T MIND SEEING HER **SMILE**.



THEN AGAIN, MAYBE MY GUN WAS OUT OF BULLETS?

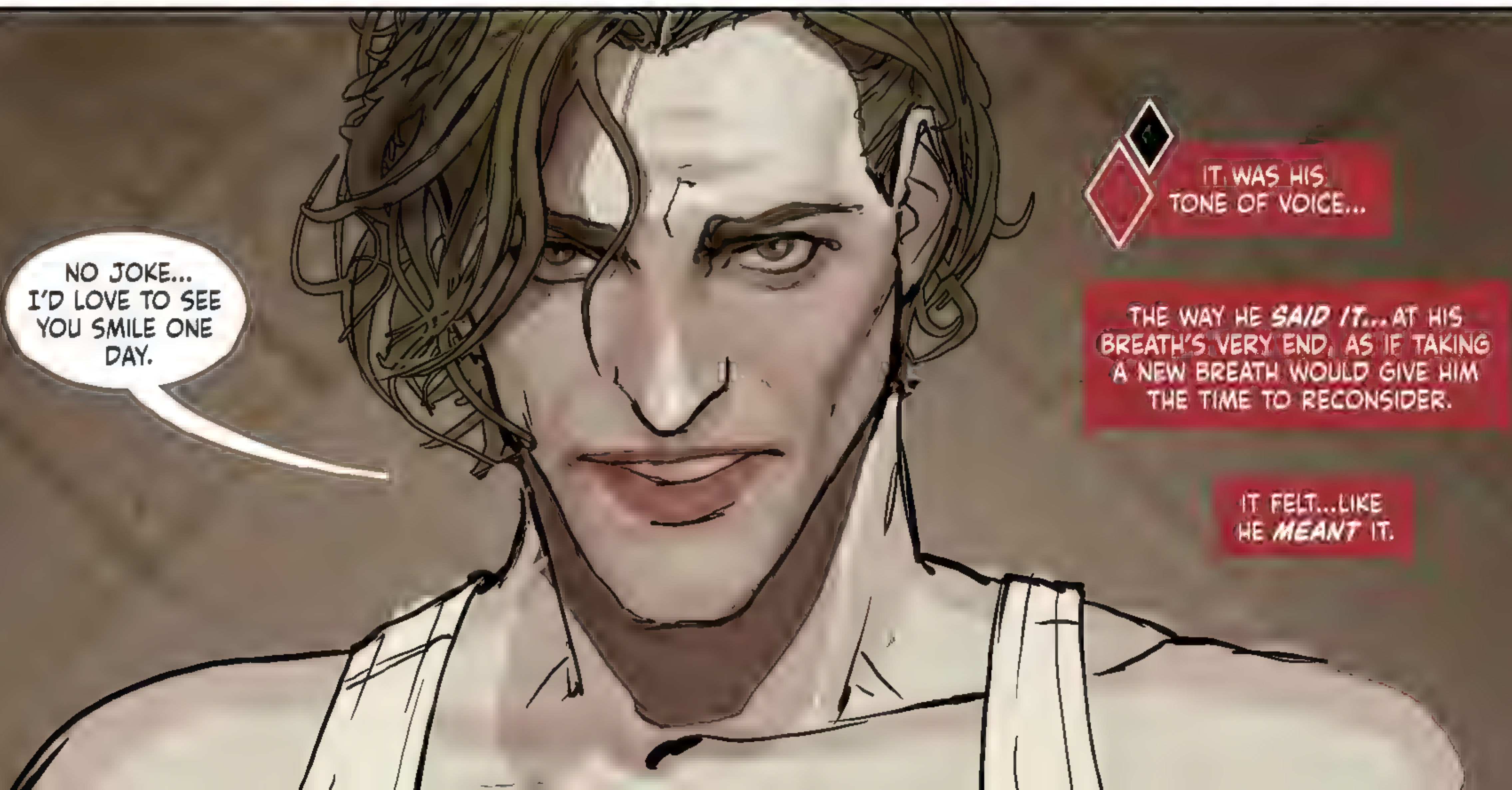
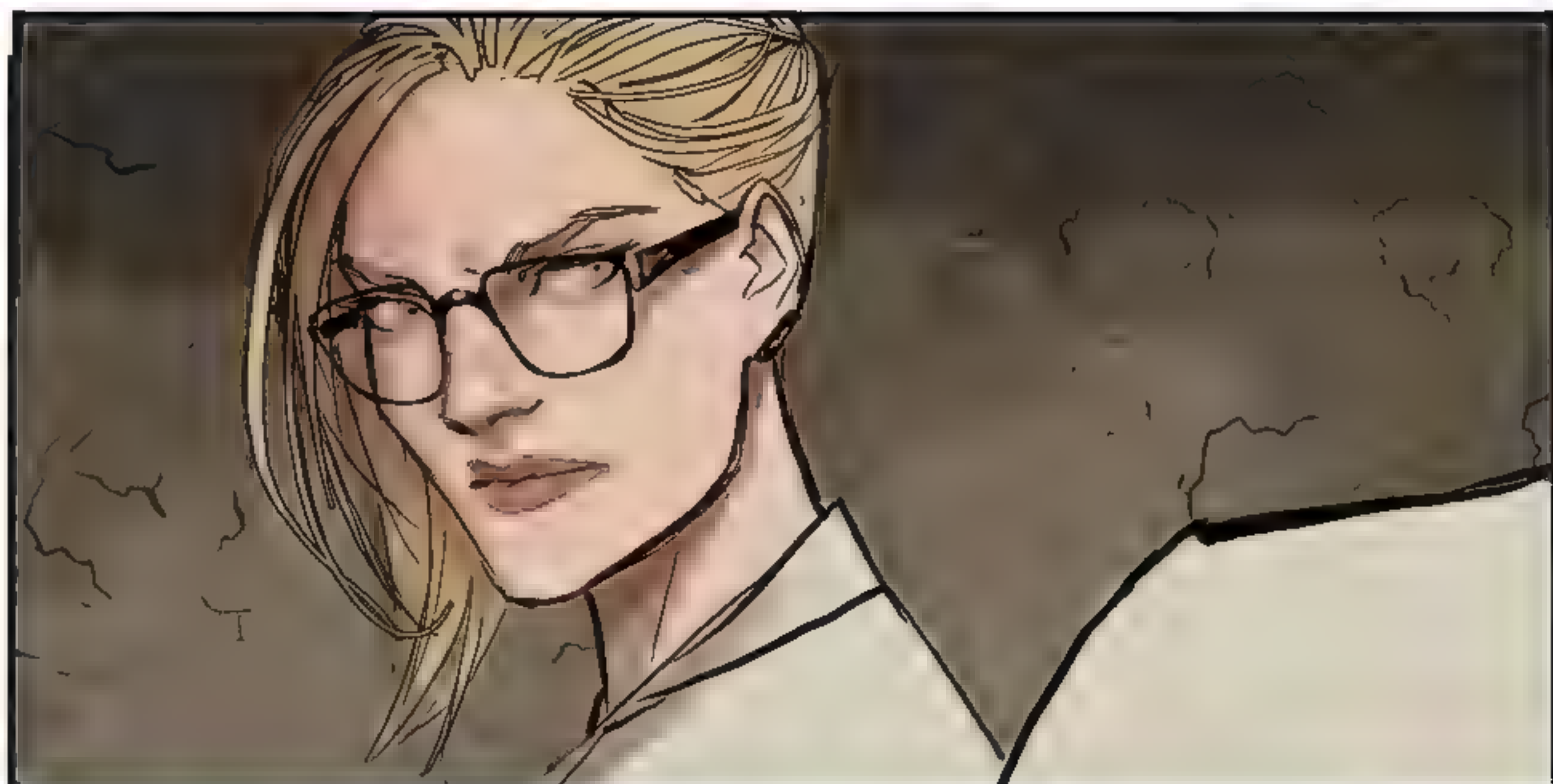
WHO KNOWS!

CRAZY PEOPLE, AMIRITE, DOCTOR?

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA!



DR. QUINN...

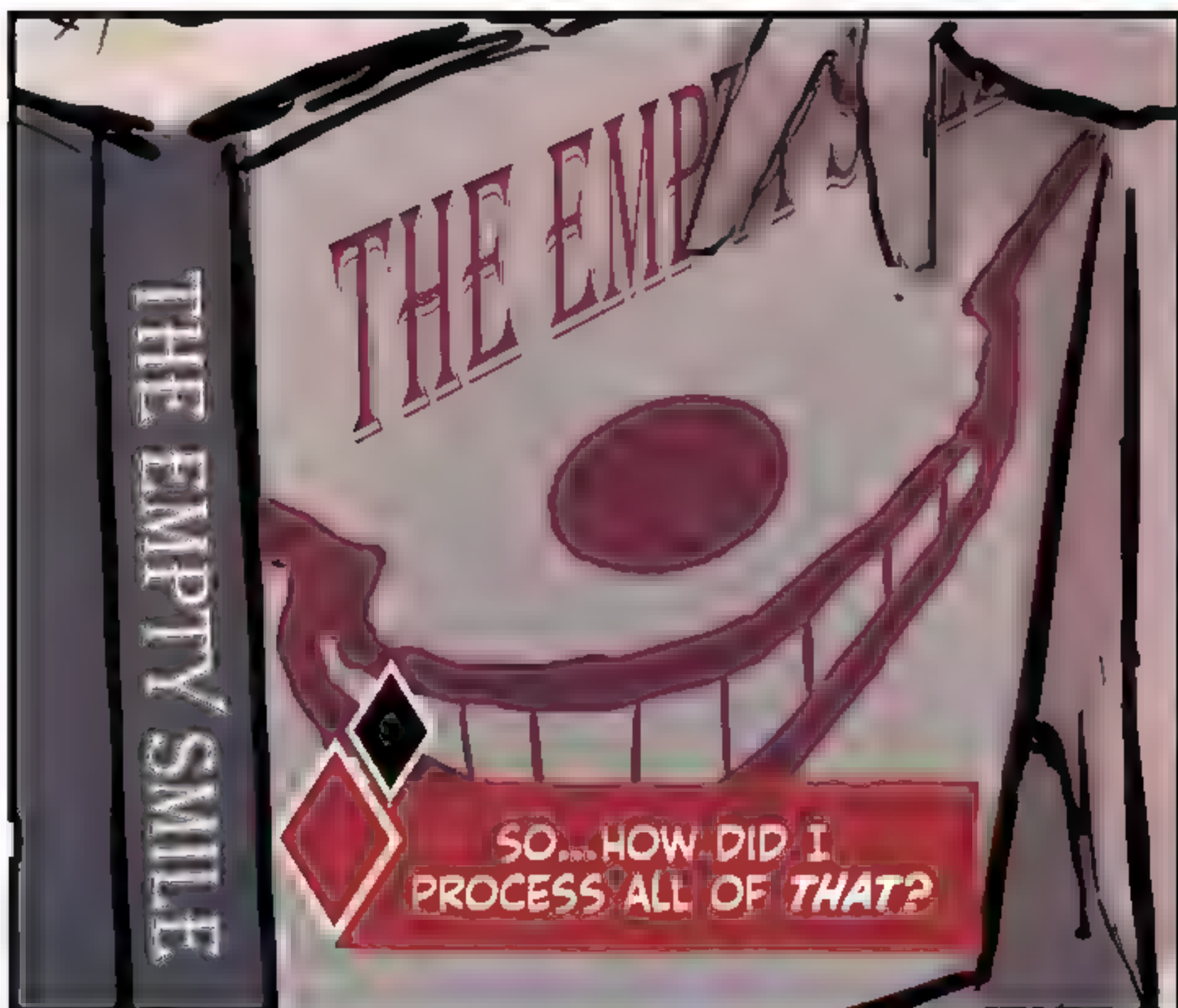


NO JOKE... I'D LOVE TO SEE YOU SMILE ONE DAY.

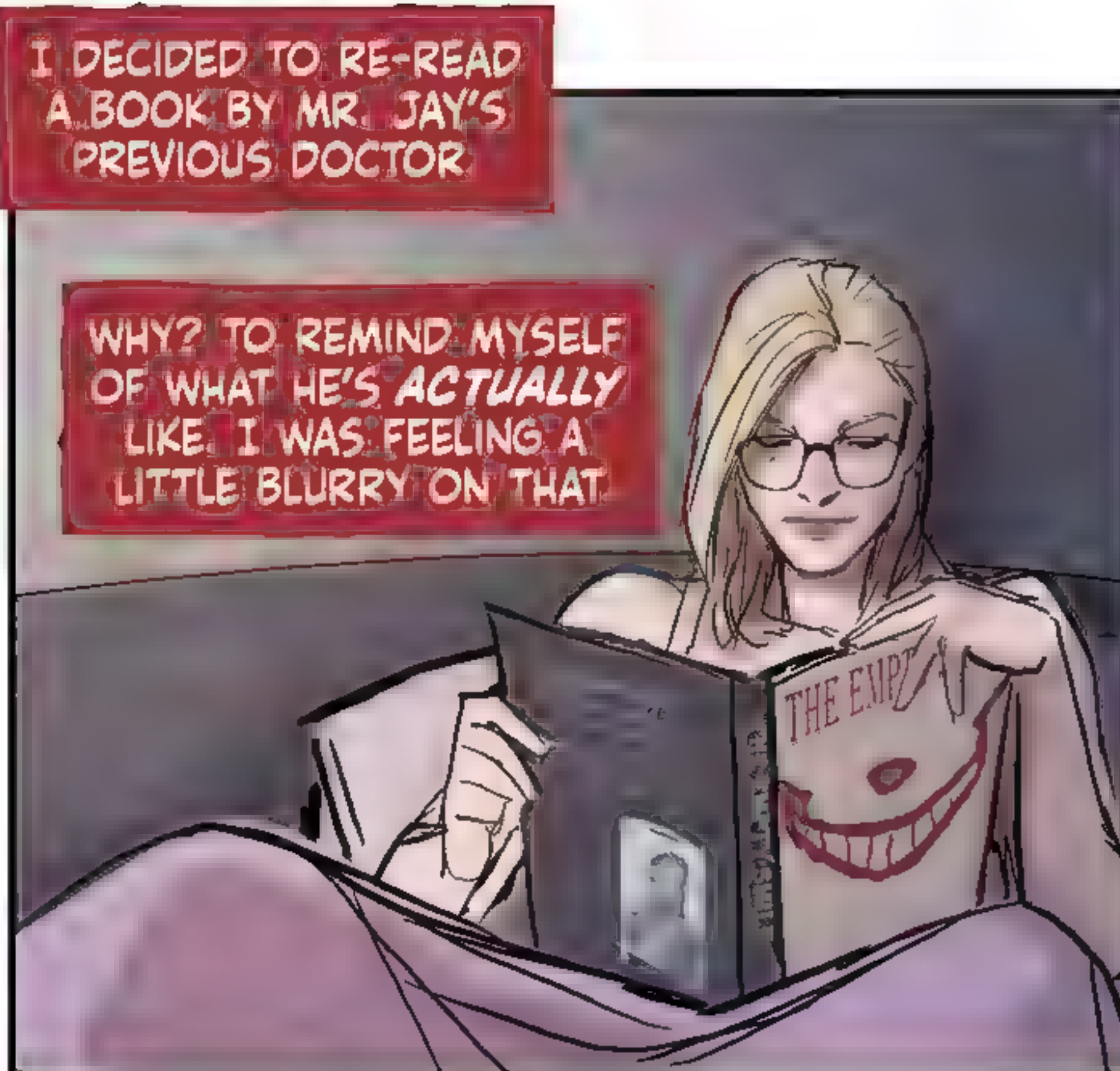
IT WAS HIS TONE OF VOICE...

THE WAY HE *SAID IT*... AT HIS BREATH'S VERY END, AS IF TAKING A NEW BREATH WOULD GIVE HIM THE TIME TO RECONSIDER.

IT FELT...LIKE HE *MEANT* IT.



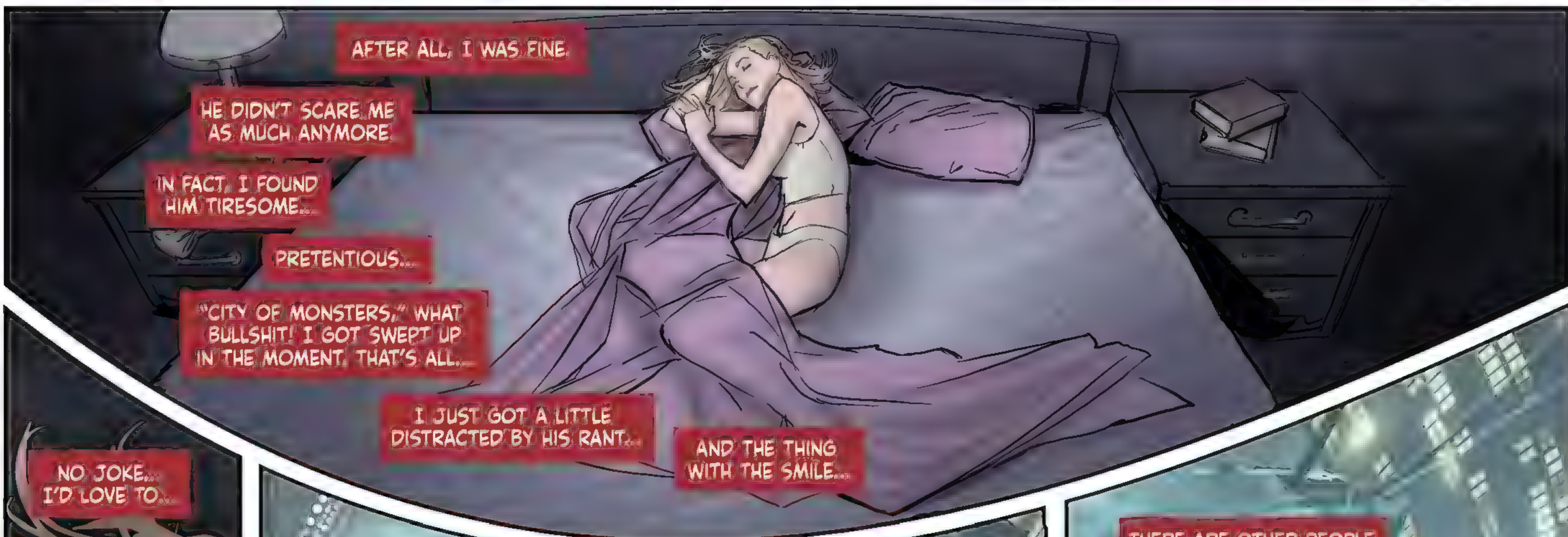
SO...HOW DID I
PROCESS ALL OF THAT?



WHY? TO REMIND MYSELF
OF WHAT HE'S **ACTUALLY**
LIKE. I WAS FEELING A
LITTLE BLURRY ON THAT.



WHEN I WAS DONE READING I
DECIDED I WOULD SLEEP. NO
BOOZE, NO NOTHING.



AFTER ALL, I WAS FINE.

HE DIDN'T SCARE ME
AS MUCH ANYMORE.

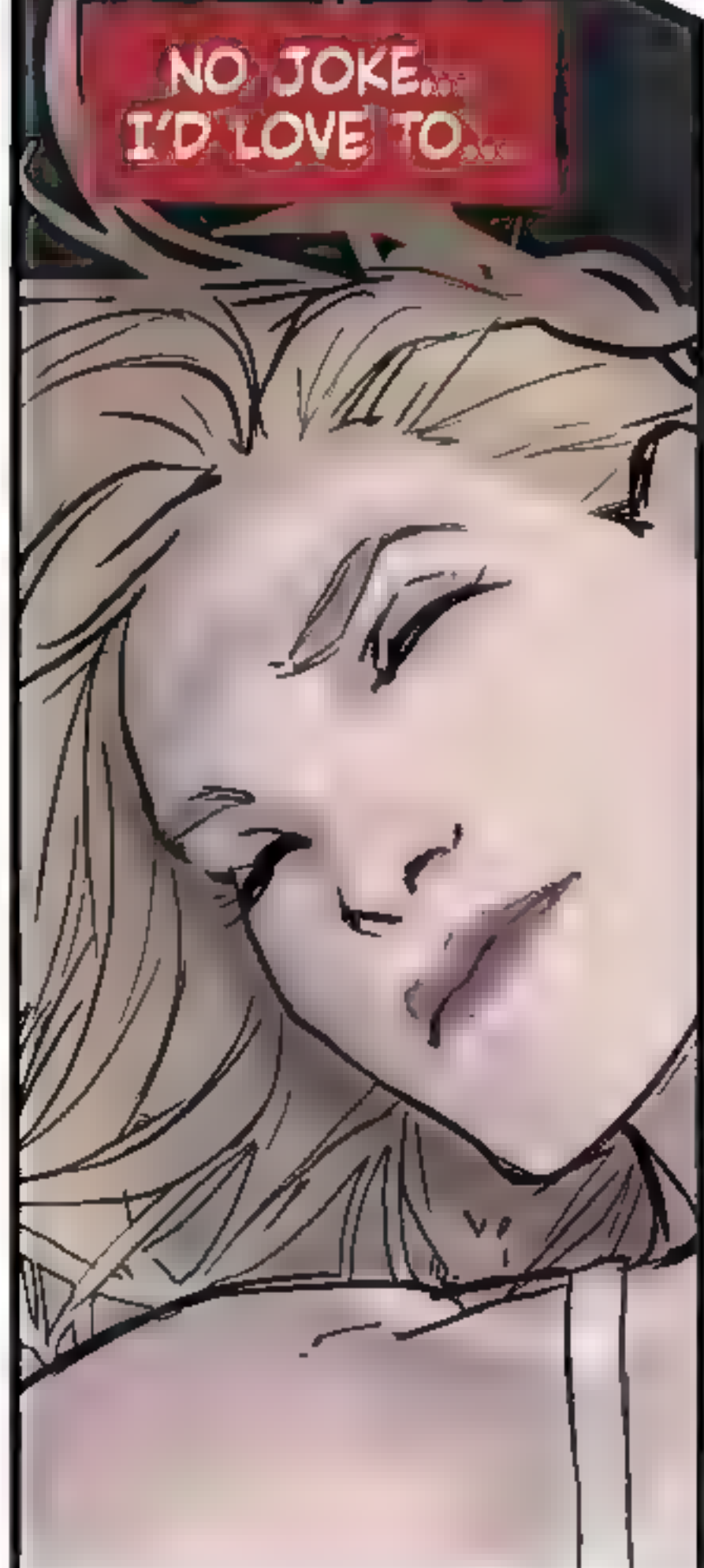
IN FACT, I FOUND
HIM TIRESOME.

PRETENTIOUS.

"CITY OF MONSTERS," WHAT
BULLSHIT! I GOT SWEEPED UP
IN THE MOMENT, THAT'S ALL.

I JUST GOT A LITTLE
DISTRACTED BY HIS RANT.

AND THE THING
WITH THE SMILE.



NO JOKE...
I'D LOVE TO.



WHEN I FINALLY FALL
ASLEEP I DREAM OF
MYSELF WALKING.



AND I'M NOT ALONE.



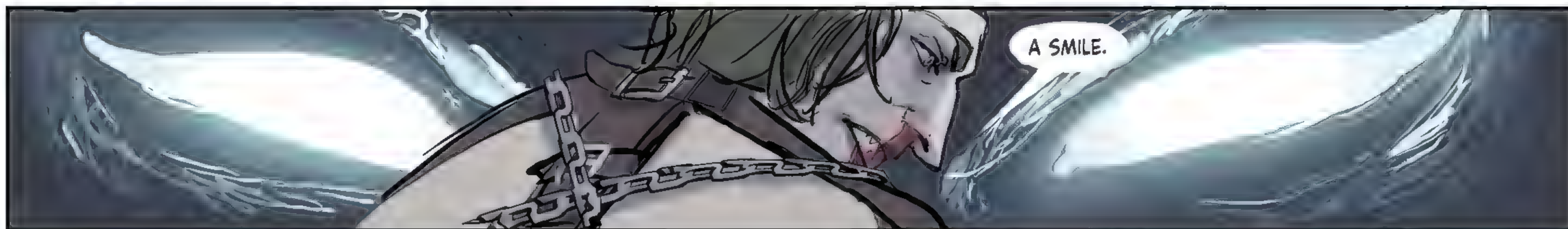
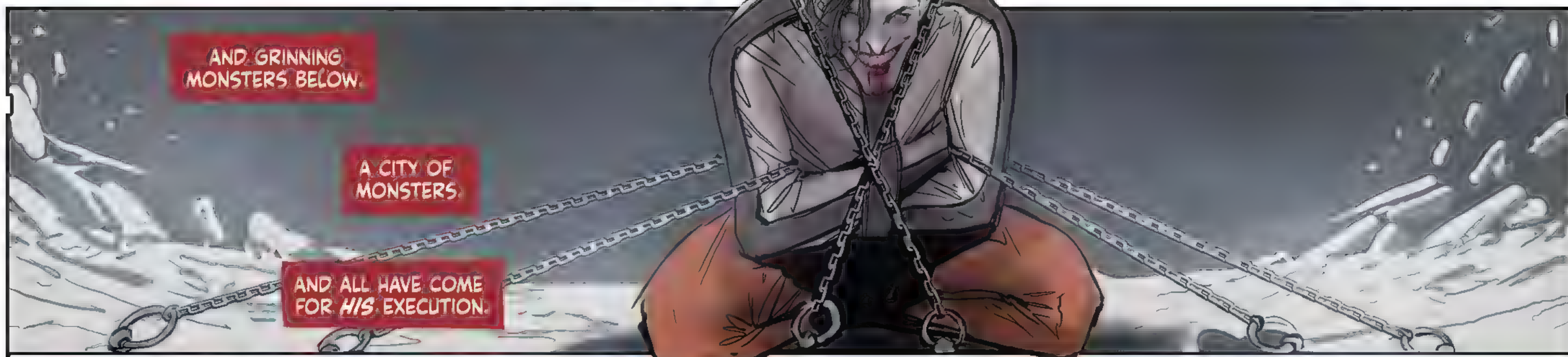
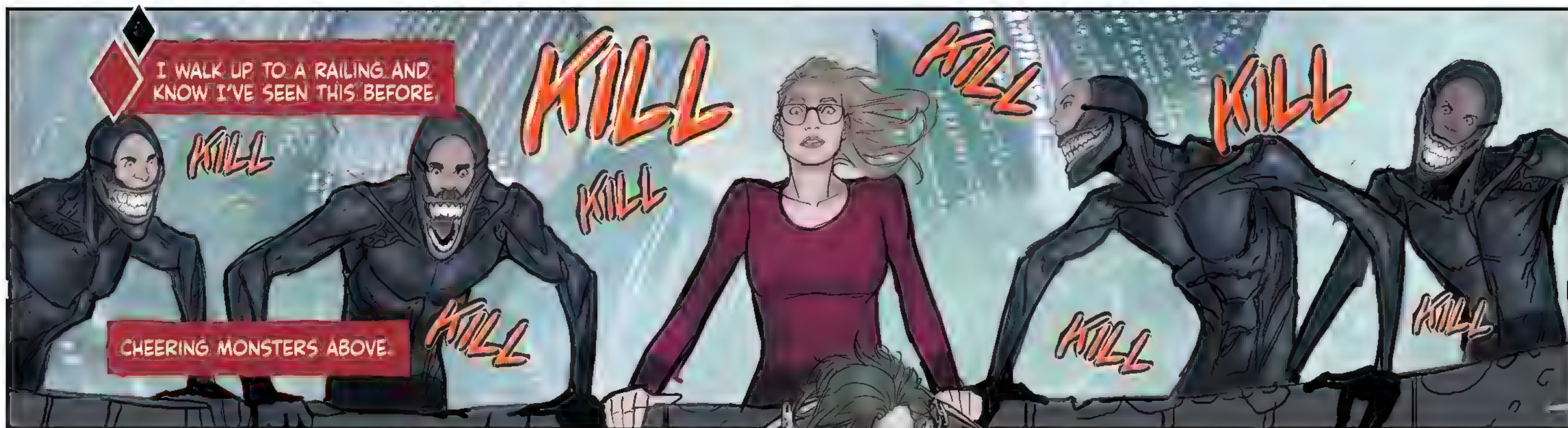
THERE ARE OTHER PEOPLE
GOING MY WAY.



REGULAR PEOPLE IN
A REGULAR CITY.

FINE NIGHT
FOR AN **EXECUTION**.
ISN'T IT, MISS?

I AGREE. I TOLD
MY HUSBAND TO HIRE
A BABYSITTER 'CAUSE I
HAD TO BE HERE
FOR THIS!



LATER I'D LEARN I WASN'T THE ONLY ONE HAVING TROUBLE SLEEPING.

SSSHHHHT

WELL WHAT DO YOU KNOW? MY PIZZA IS HERE!

LATE DELIVERY, AND I DO BELIEVE I ORDERED ANCHOVIES WITH THIS!

GIVE ME A BREAK. YOU KNOW HOW HARD THIS WAS TO GET OUT OF DR. STRANGE'S OFFICE?

WELL, B+ FOR EFFORT.

I WANT DOUBLE THE MONEY!

YOU TELL THAT TO MY ASSOCIATES WHEN YOU GO TO COLLECT.

I'M SURE THEY'LL TAKE IT WELL.

YOU SON OF A BITCH. I'LL--

WHAT?

EXACTLY!

YOU REALLY SHOULD SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP FOR THAT GAMBLING ADDICTION OF YOURS, MR. ROBBINS.

I MEAN, YOU ARE IN THE RIGHT PLACE FOR THAT. THEY CARE HERE.

OH YES, THEY CARE A LOT...

FOUR DAYS PASSED AND THINGS GOT PROGRESSIVELY WORSE.

HIS WORDS ECHOED IN MY MIND, MAKING ME FEEL OVERLY CONSCIOUS OF EVERY SMILE I MADE.

HERE YOU GO, MISS.

THANK YOU.

I SPENT MOST OF MY FREE TIME WATCHING THE NEWS. *NOTHING* TO SMILE ABOUT THERE.

...GOTHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT IS TORN APART FROM WITHIN AS ALL EFFORTS ARE FOCUSED ON IDENTIFYING THE REMAINING EXECUTIONERS ON THE FORCE.

IN RELATED NEWS, BODIES OF SIX GANG MEMBERS WERE FOUND...

ON THE FIFTH DAY, MY MIND TURNED *SADISTIC*.

A GOOD HAIR MOMENT SPARKED A SECOND OF UNRESTRAINED VANITY. I SMILED TO THE MIRROR AND A THOUGHT FORMED FASTER THAN I COULD STOP IT.

LIKE A BIT OF GALLOWS HUMOR THAT HITS YOU DURING A FUNERAL, IT CAME...UNWANTED, YET RELENTLESS.

HE COULDN'T PULL THE TRIGGER BECAUSE I WAS TOO *BEAUTIFUL TO DIE*.

I SPENT THE REST OF THE DAY FEELING DISGUSTED WITH MYSELF FOR LETTING SUCH A THOUGHT EVEN ENTER MY MIND.

LITTLE DID I KNOW IT WAS FAR FROM OVER.

HE HAD STOLEN MY NIGHTS...

...MY DAYS...

...AND MY SMILE.

NEXT...

...NEXT WOULD BE MY HEART.

I DECIDED TO AVOID HIM FOR THE NEXT TWO WEEKS. SEE IF THAT WOULD HELP.

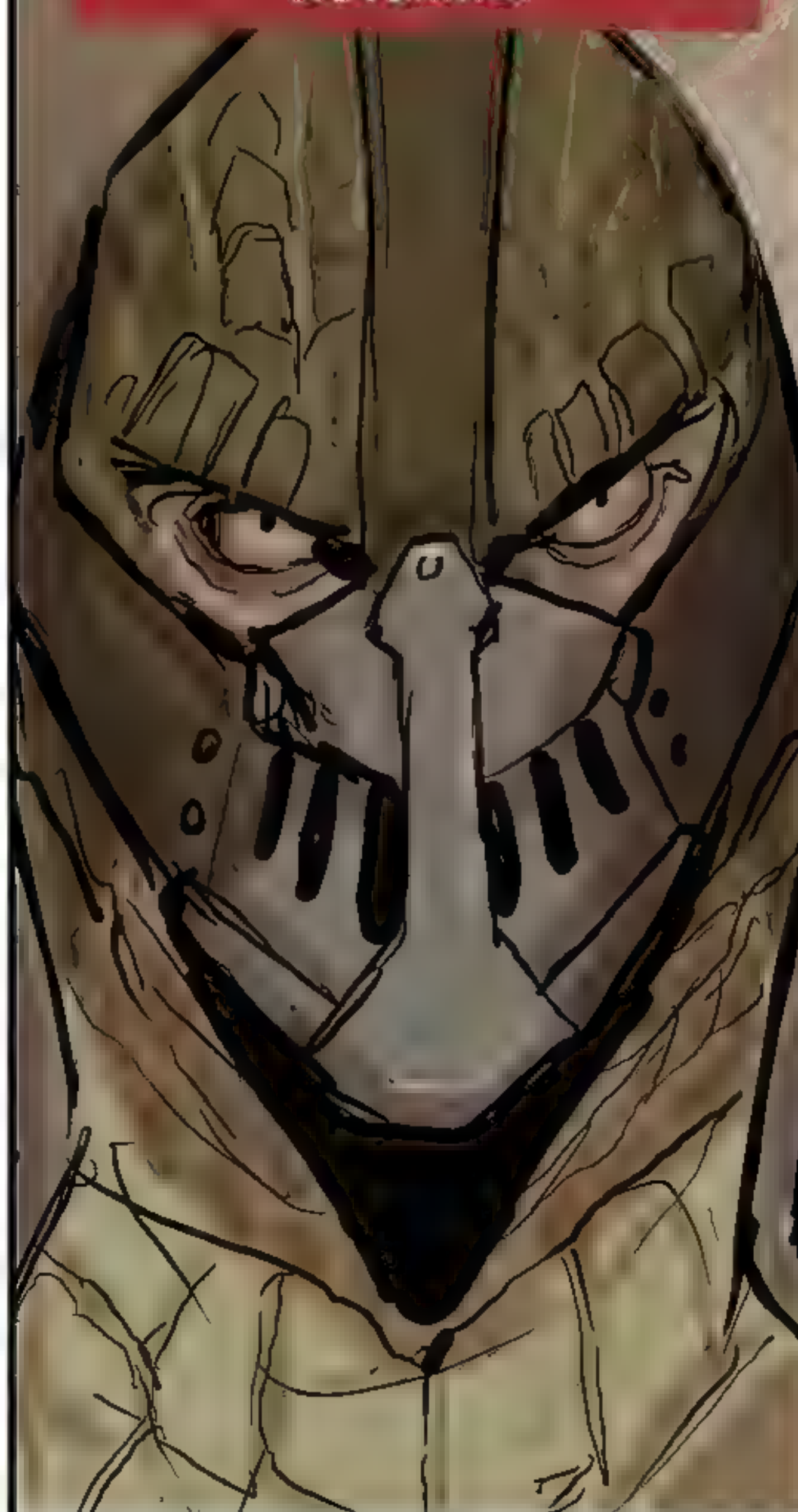
IT DIDN'T. FOR THE DURATION OF THOSE TWO WEEKS, I FOUND MYSELF *UNFOCUSED*, MY MIND WANDERING BACK TO THAT MOMENT AND THE SOUND OF HIS VOICE.



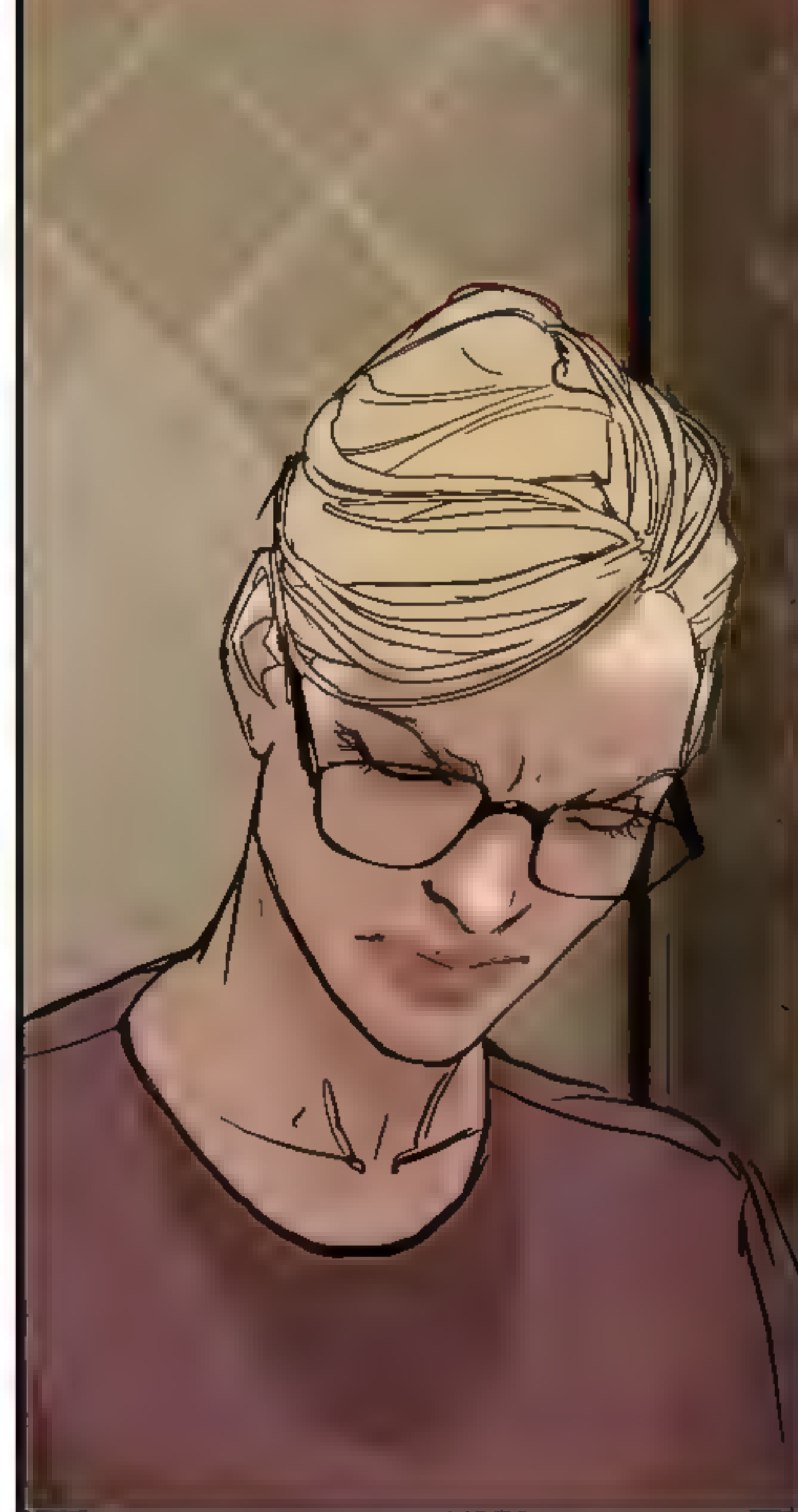
TO *ESCAPE* THOSE THOUGHTS, INSTEAD OF BEING PRODUCTIVE I TURNED TO THE TRIVIAL.



IN MY EXHAUSTED STATE I COMMITTED THE CARDINAL SIN OF THERAPY...I STOPPED *LISTENING*.



I GREW *CYNICAL*. MY SESSIONS WERE JUST EMPTY, USELESS RANTS FROM BOTH EGOMANIACS AND JUST PLAIN *MANIACS*.



AND IT ALL TASTES LIKE CHICKEN, YOU KNOW?



I RETREATED MORE AND MORE, JUST TUNING OUT...



I QUESTIONED MY THEORY, MY IDEAS, MY WILL TO CONTINUE.



AND ALL THAT TIME, MY MIND JUST KEPT GOING BACK TO HIM...



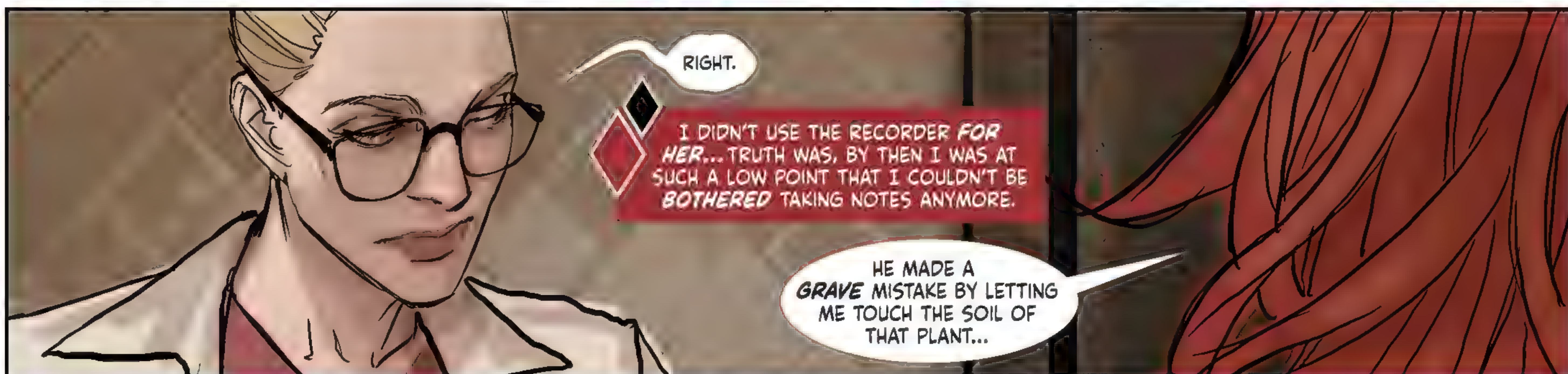
"NO JOKE... I'D LOVE TO SEE YOU SMILE ONE DAY..."



I DO **APPRECIATE** IT, YOU KNOW...THE FACT THAT YOU'RE USING A RECORDER INSTEAD OF **PAPER**.

OTHERS BEFORE YOU HAD DIFFERENT METHODS. ONE OF MY PREVIOUS DOCTORS, HE BROUGHT A POTTED PLANT.

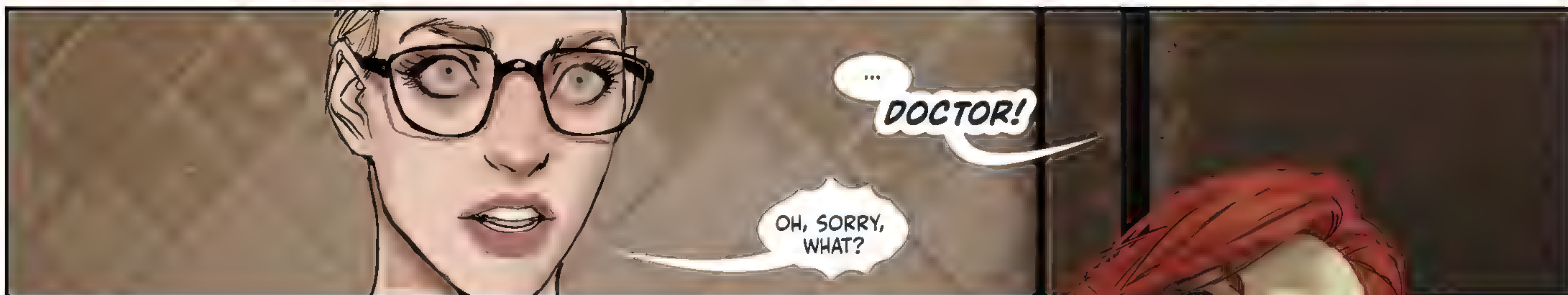
WATERED IT WITH **BLEACH** IN FRONT OF ME...TO CONVINCE ME I COULDN'T PHYSICALLY FEEL ITS **PAIN**...



RIGHT.

I DIDN'T USE THE RECORDER **FOR HER**... TRUTH WAS, BY THEN I WAS AT SUCH A LOW POINT THAT I COULDN'T BE **BOTHERED** TAKING NOTES ANYMORE.

HE MADE A **GRAVE** MISTAKE BY LETTING ME TOUCH THE SOIL OF THAT PLANT...

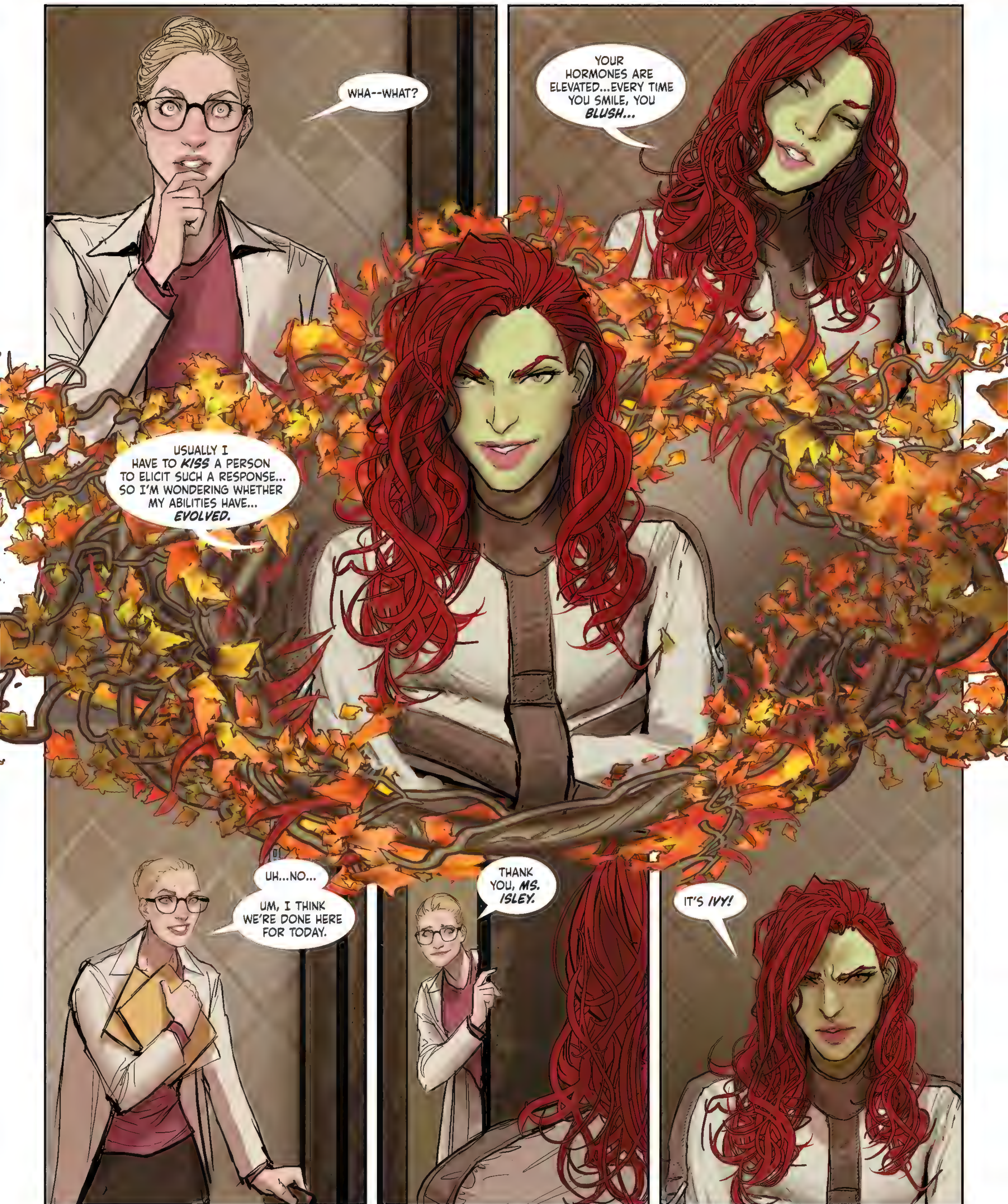


...
DOCTOR!

OH, SORRY, WHAT?



IS IT ME?



WHA--WHAT?

YOUR
HORMONES ARE
ELEVATED...EVERY TIME
YOU SMILE, YOU
BLUSH...

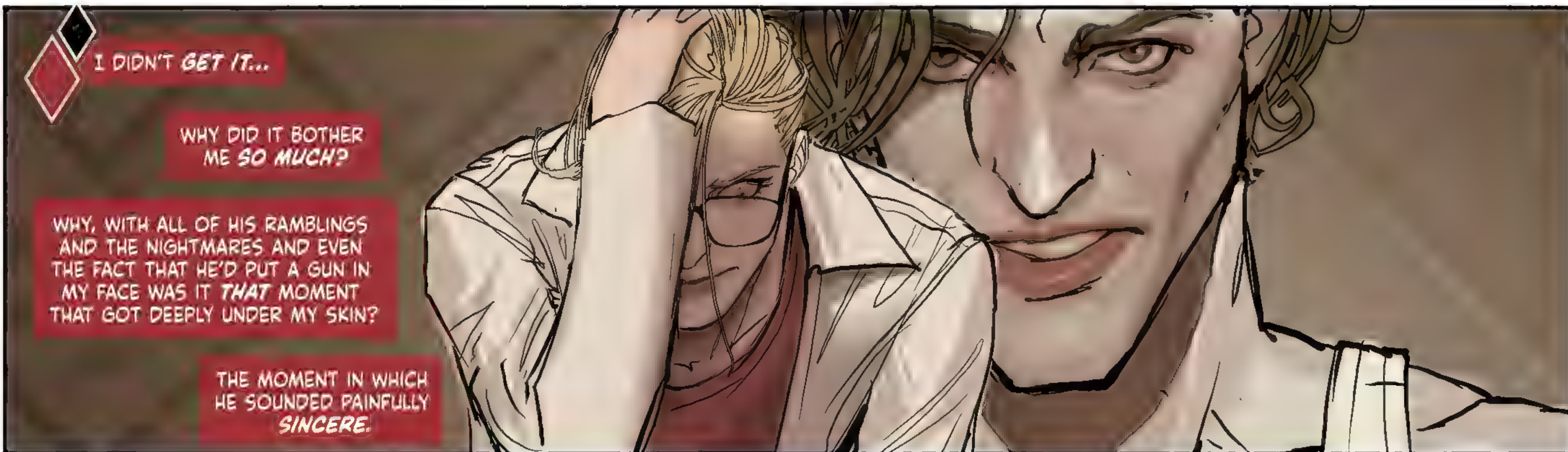
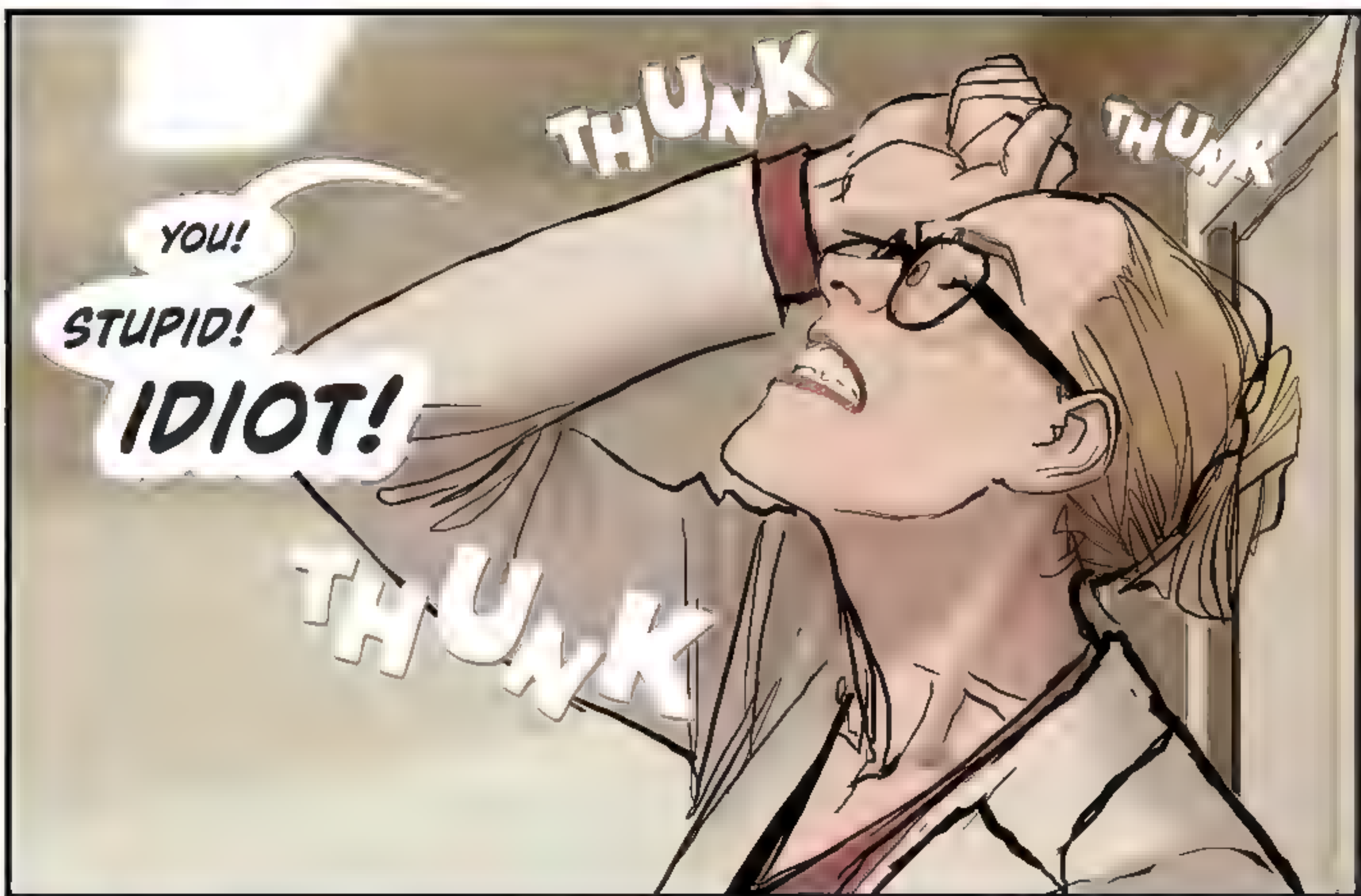
USUALLY I
HAVE TO *KISS* A PERSON
TO ELICIT SUCH A RESPONSE...
SO I'M WONDERING WHETHER
MY ABILITIES HAVE...
EVOLVED.

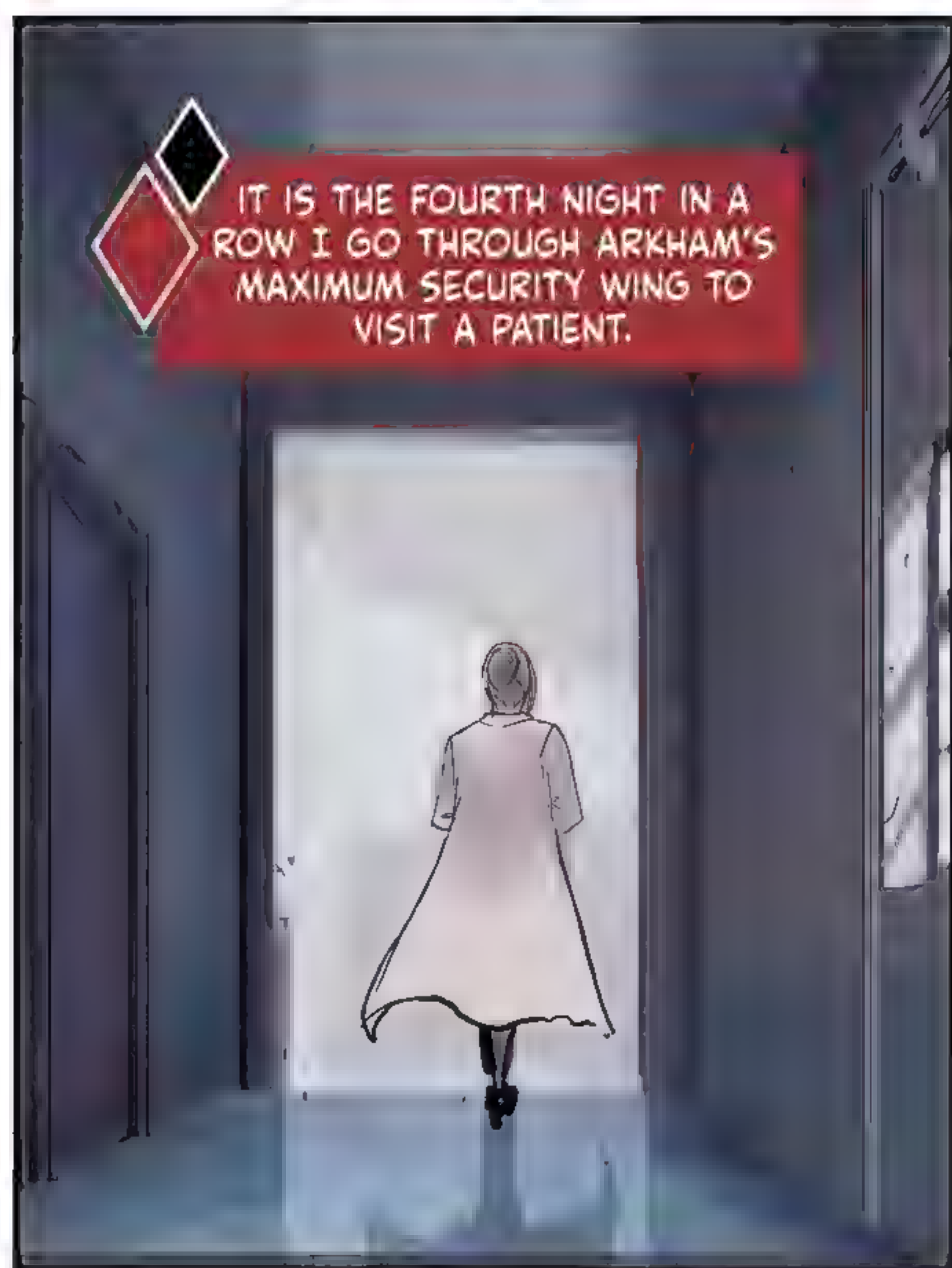
UH...NO...

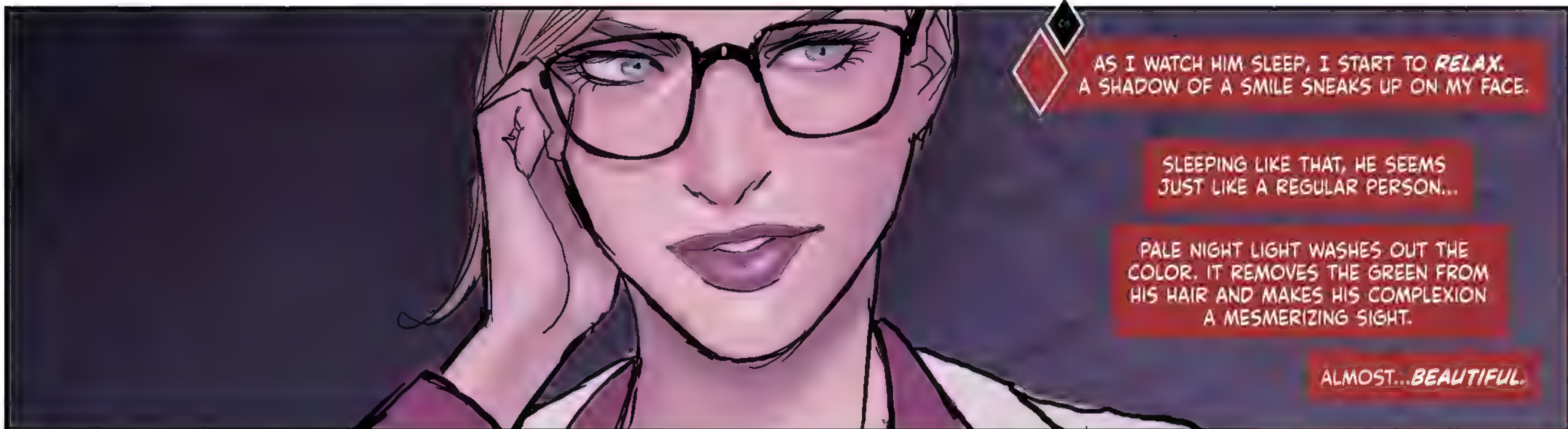
UM, I THINK
WE'RE DONE HERE
FOR TODAY.

THANK
YOU, *MS.*
ISLEY.

IT'S *IVY!*







AS I WATCH HIM SLEEP, I START TO *RELAX*.
A SHADOW OF A SMILE SNEAKS UP ON MY FACE.

SLEEPING LIKE THAT, HE SEEMS
JUST LIKE A REGULAR PERSON...

PALE NIGHT LIGHT WASHES OUT THE
COLOR. IT REMOVES THE GREEN FROM
HIS HAIR AND MAKES HIS COMPLEXION
A MESMERIZING SIGHT.

ALMOST...*BEAUTIFUL*.



THIS IS MY OWN *SECRET THERAPY*.
A WAY TO BEAT THE FEAR.



THERE'S A TRICK PEOPLE USE
TO GET OVER THE FEAR OF
PUBLIC SPEAKING.

YOU IMAGINE THE
AUDIENCE *NAKED*...

WELL, SINCE MY IMAGINATION WAS
DARK AND FULL OF NIGHTMARES,
THIS WAS THE NEXT BEST THING.

AND YOU KNOW WHAT? IN THAT
WAY, IT KIND OF WORKED. HE
WASN'T SCARY.

NO...



NOT SCARY...

...JUST...

...*SCARRED*.

AS I WATCHED ONE SCARRED MAN SLEEP, SOMEWHERE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF GOTHAM, IN ANOTHER KIND OF HOSPITAL, ANOTHER SCARRED MAN WAS, I WOULD LATER LEARN, JUST *WAKING UP*.

WH...

NGH...
WHAT...

WHAT'S
WRONG WITH
MY EYE?

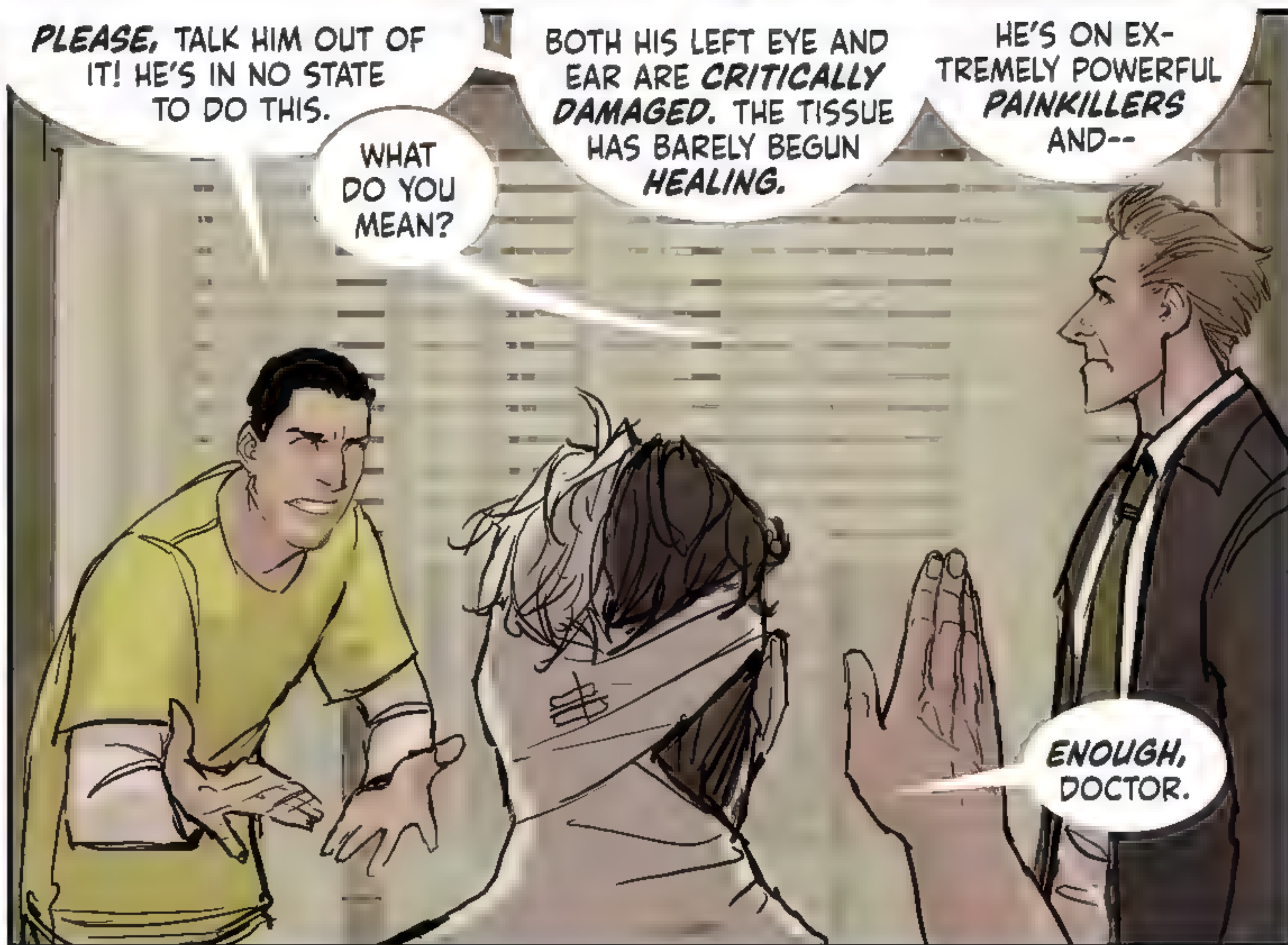
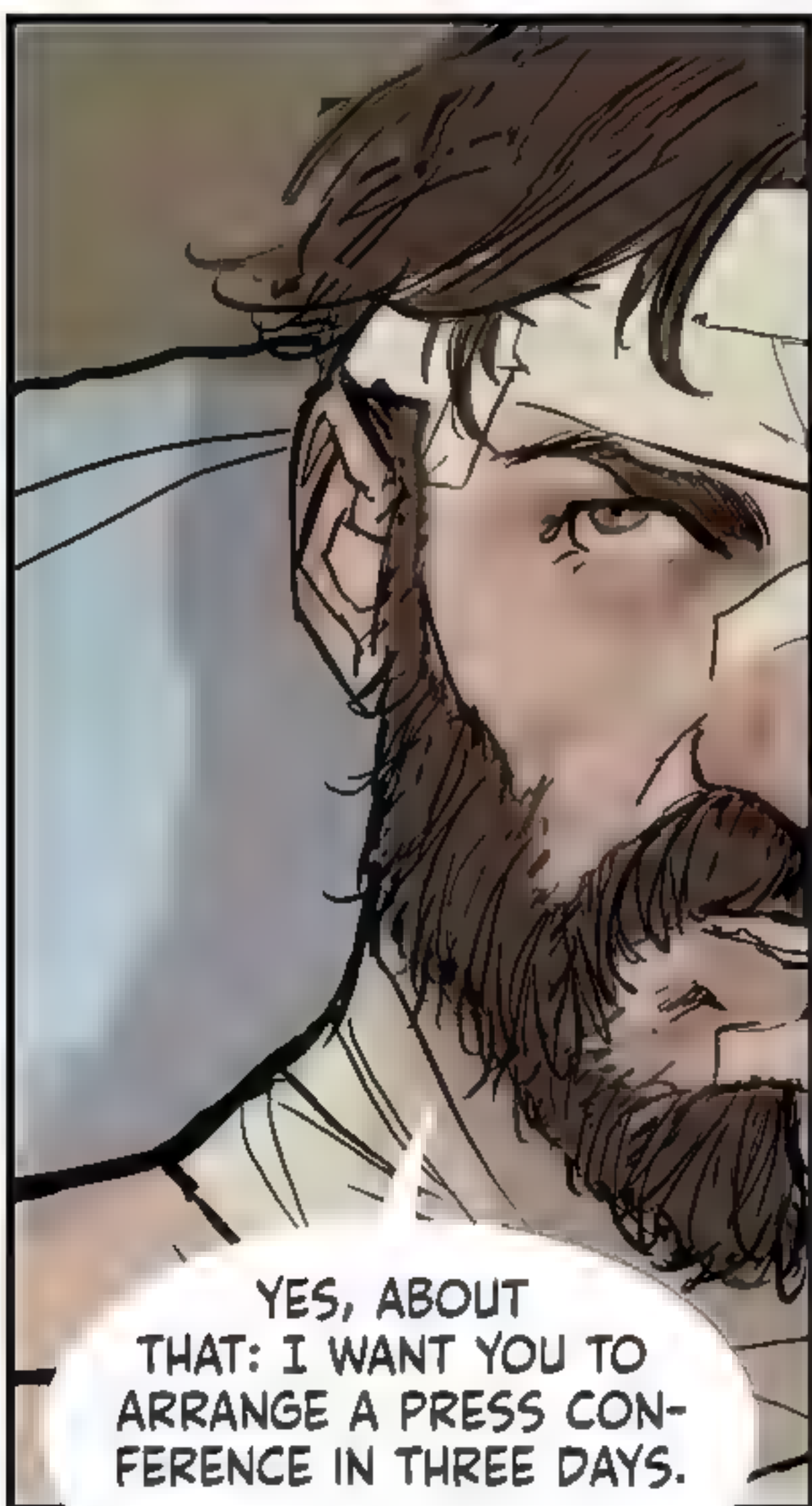
CALM DOWN,
MR. DENT! WE'LL
COVER IT RIGHT
NOW.

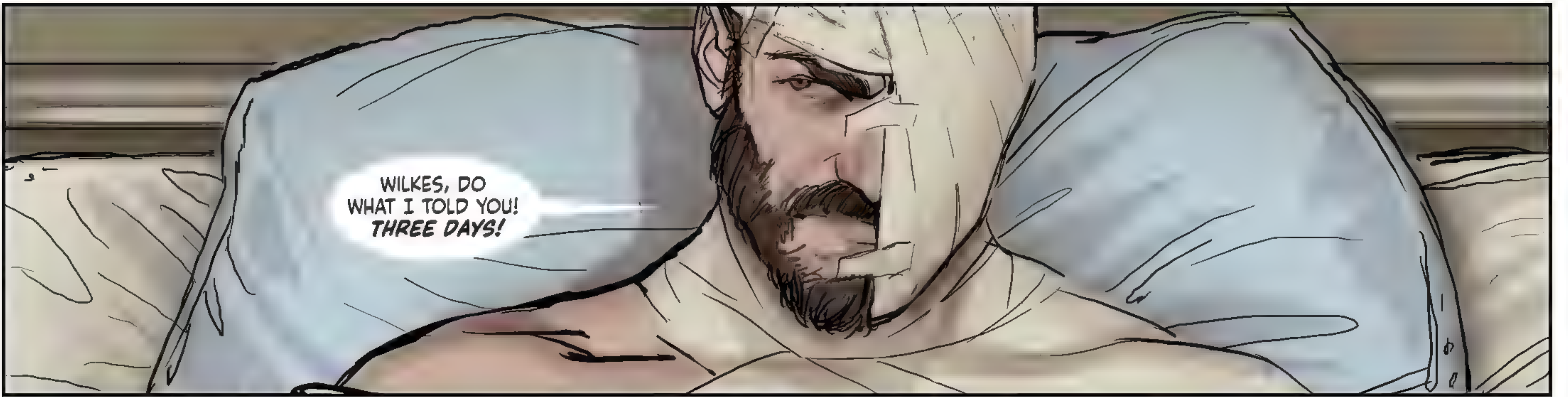
JUST RELAX!

WUH-
WHERE
AM I?

GOTHAM GENERAL.
YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH
A ROUGH FEW WEEKS,
MR. DISTRICT
ATTORNEY...



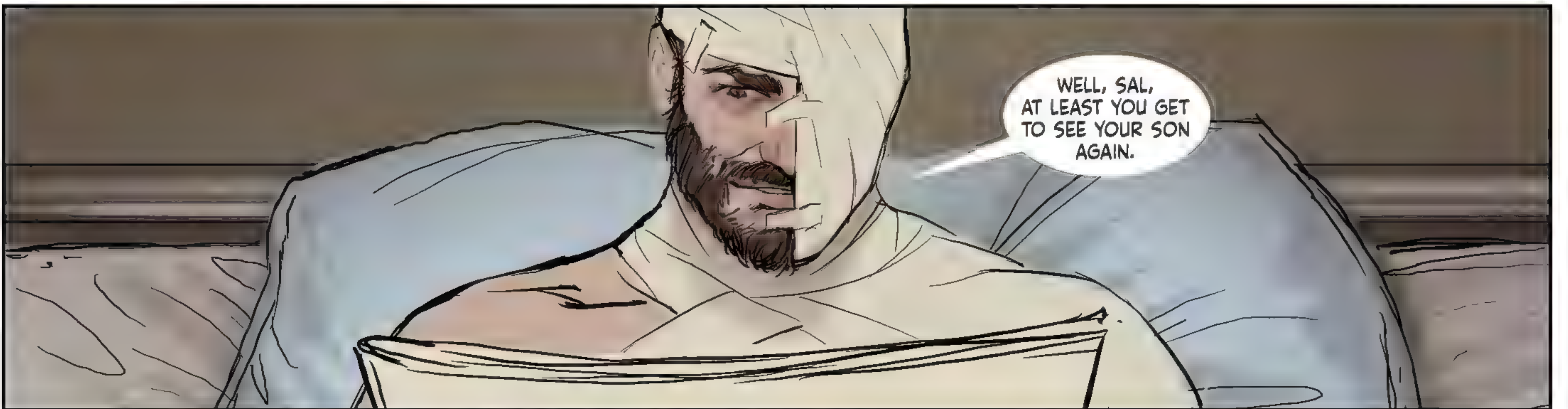




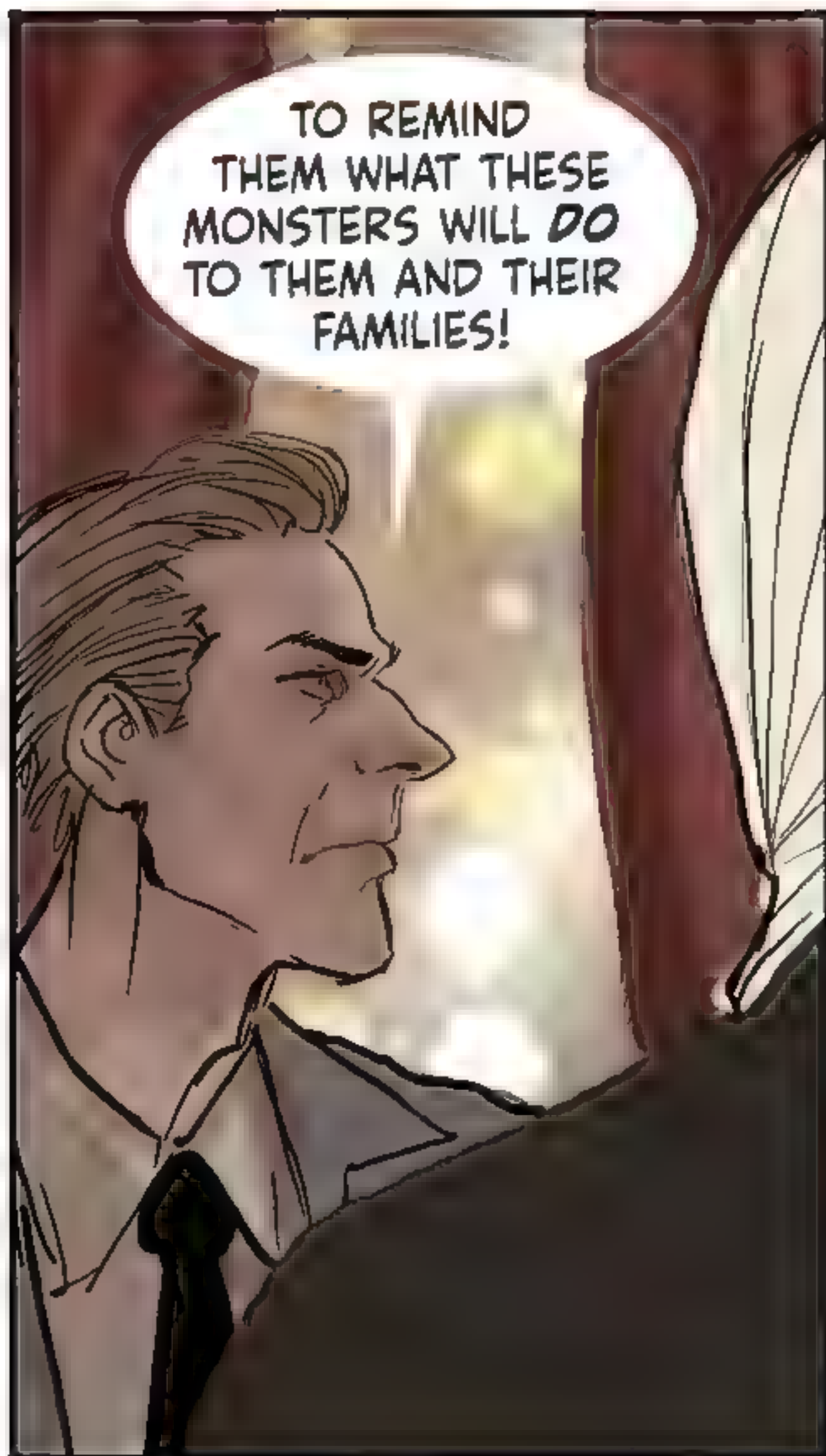
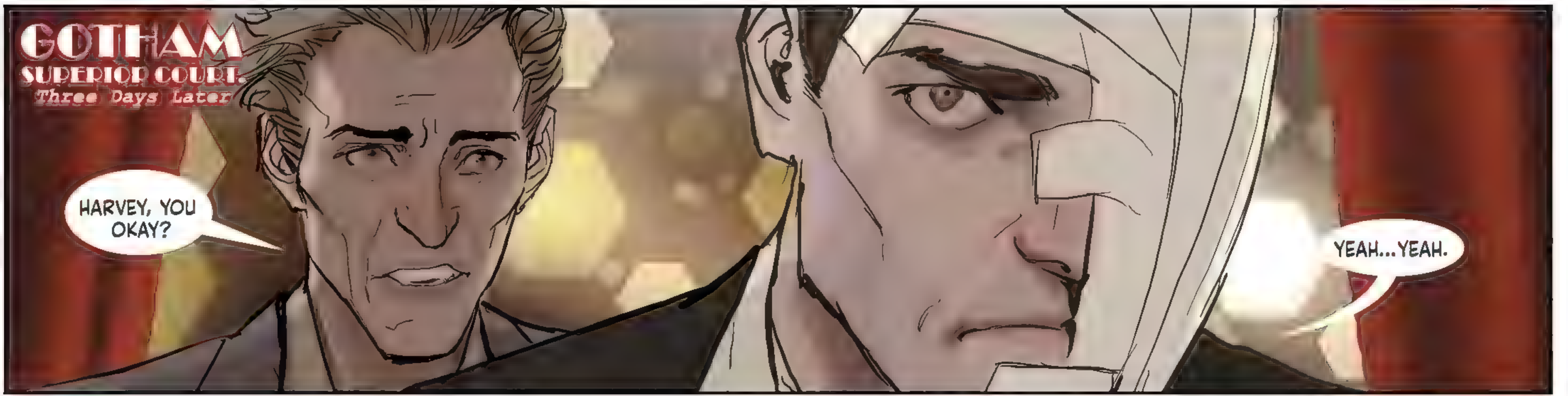
Salvatore "Sal" Moroni executed.

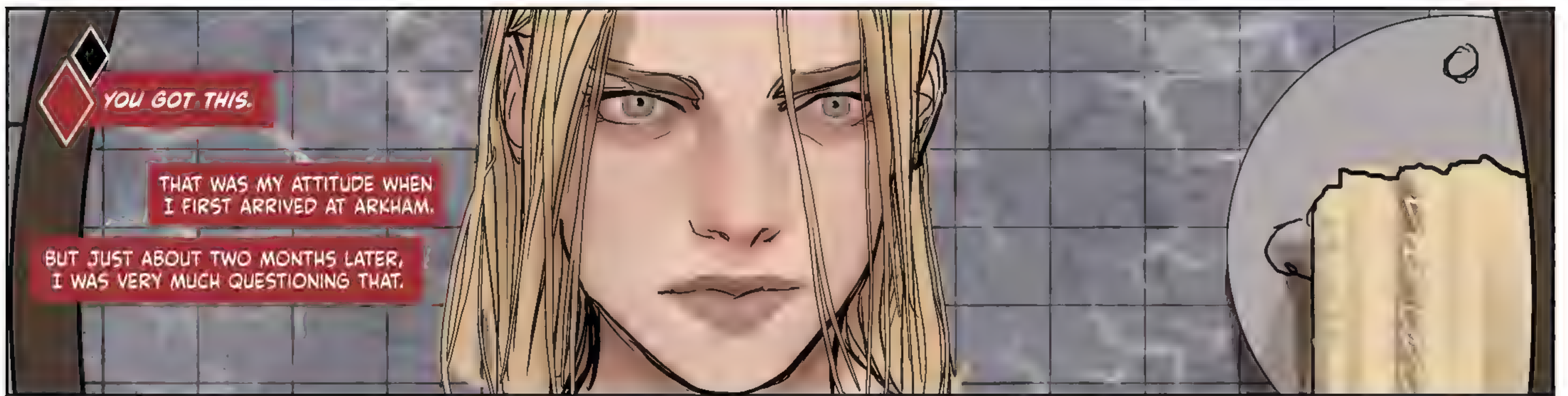
Following the attack on district attorney Harvey Dent, notorious construction mogul and suspected crime boss Salvatore Moroni met his end by the hand of the so called Executioners. The vehicle transporting Mr. Moroni to the county jail was commandeered by the executioners not long after its departure and from there on nobody knew of its whereabouts.

The autopsy concluded that Mr. Moroni was savagely beaten for an extended period of time with as many as seventeen broken bones. His end was televised as a tape was anonymously delivered to five different news channels. The identity of the *the tape as well as other remain-*





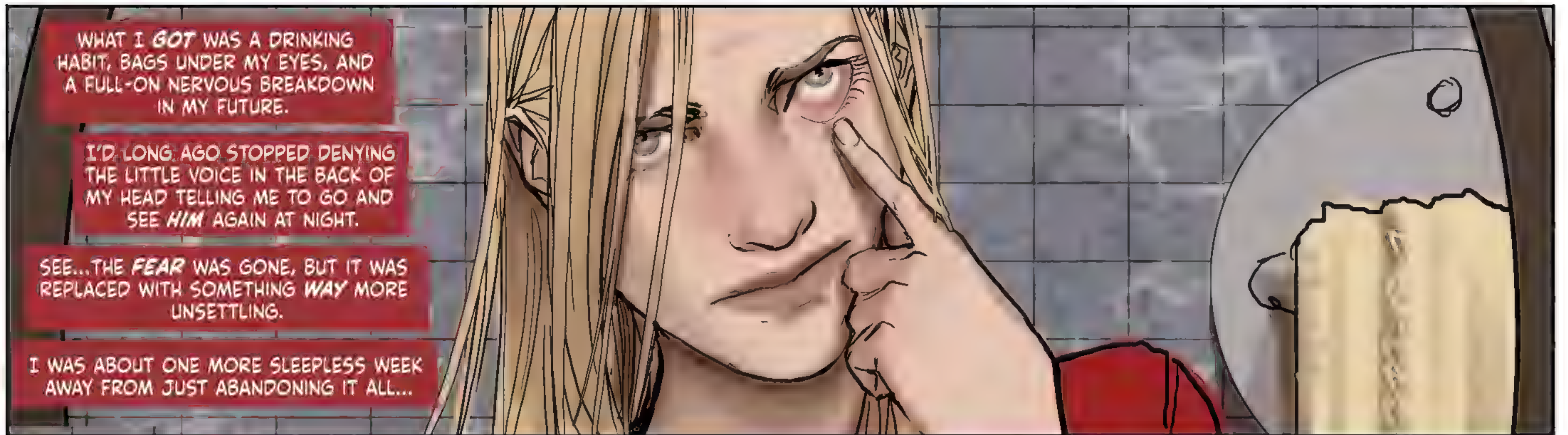




YOU GOT THIS.

THAT WAS MY ATTITUDE WHEN I FIRST ARRIVED AT ARKHAM.

BUT JUST ABOUT TWO MONTHS LATER, I WAS VERY MUCH QUESTIONING THAT.

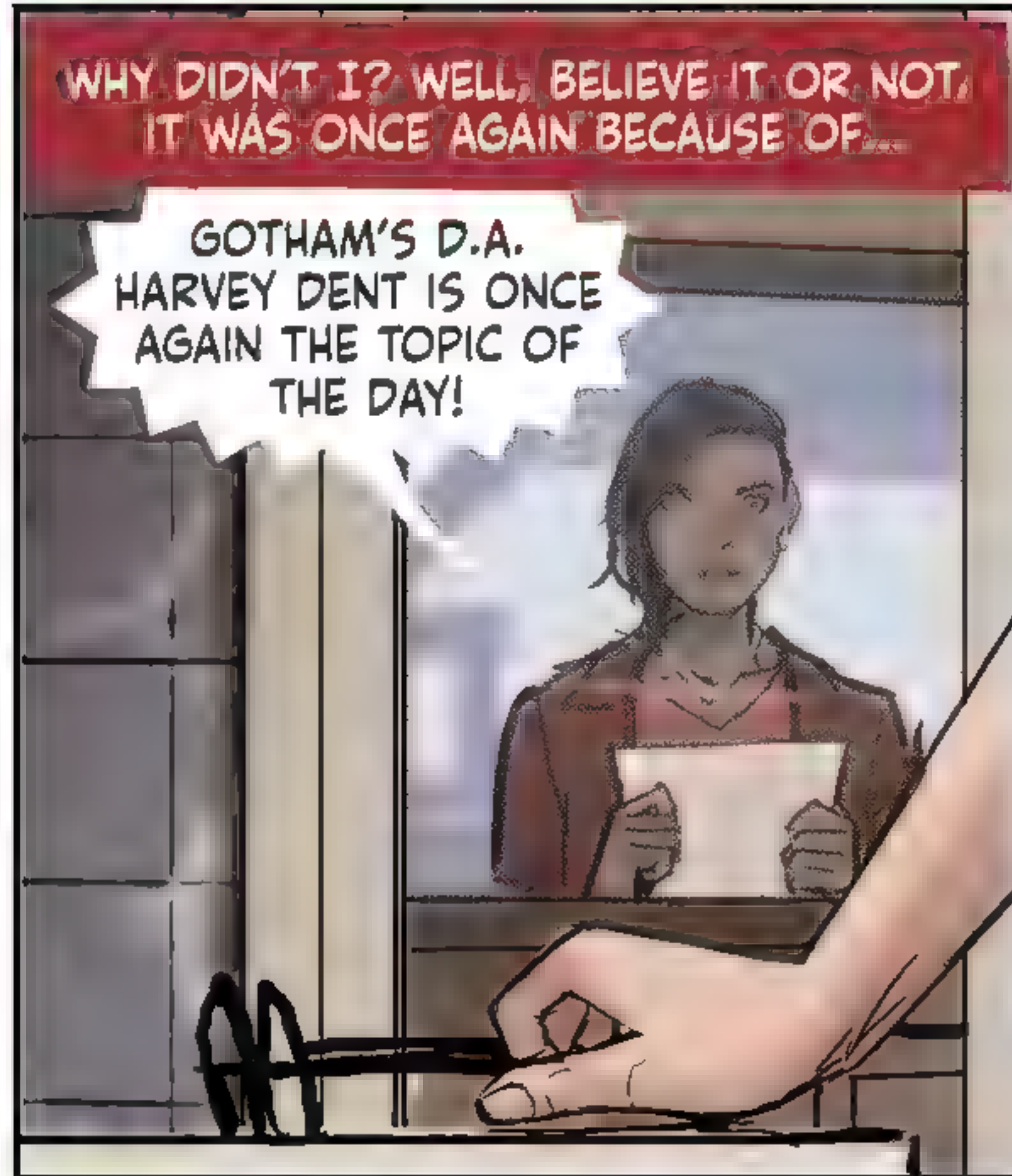


WHAT I **GOT** WAS A DRINKING HABIT, BAGS UNDER MY EYES, AND A FULL-ON NERVOUS BREAKDOWN IN MY FUTURE.

I'D LONG AGO STOPPED DENYING THE LITTLE VOICE IN THE BACK OF MY HEAD TELLING ME TO GO AND SEE **HIM** AGAIN AT NIGHT.

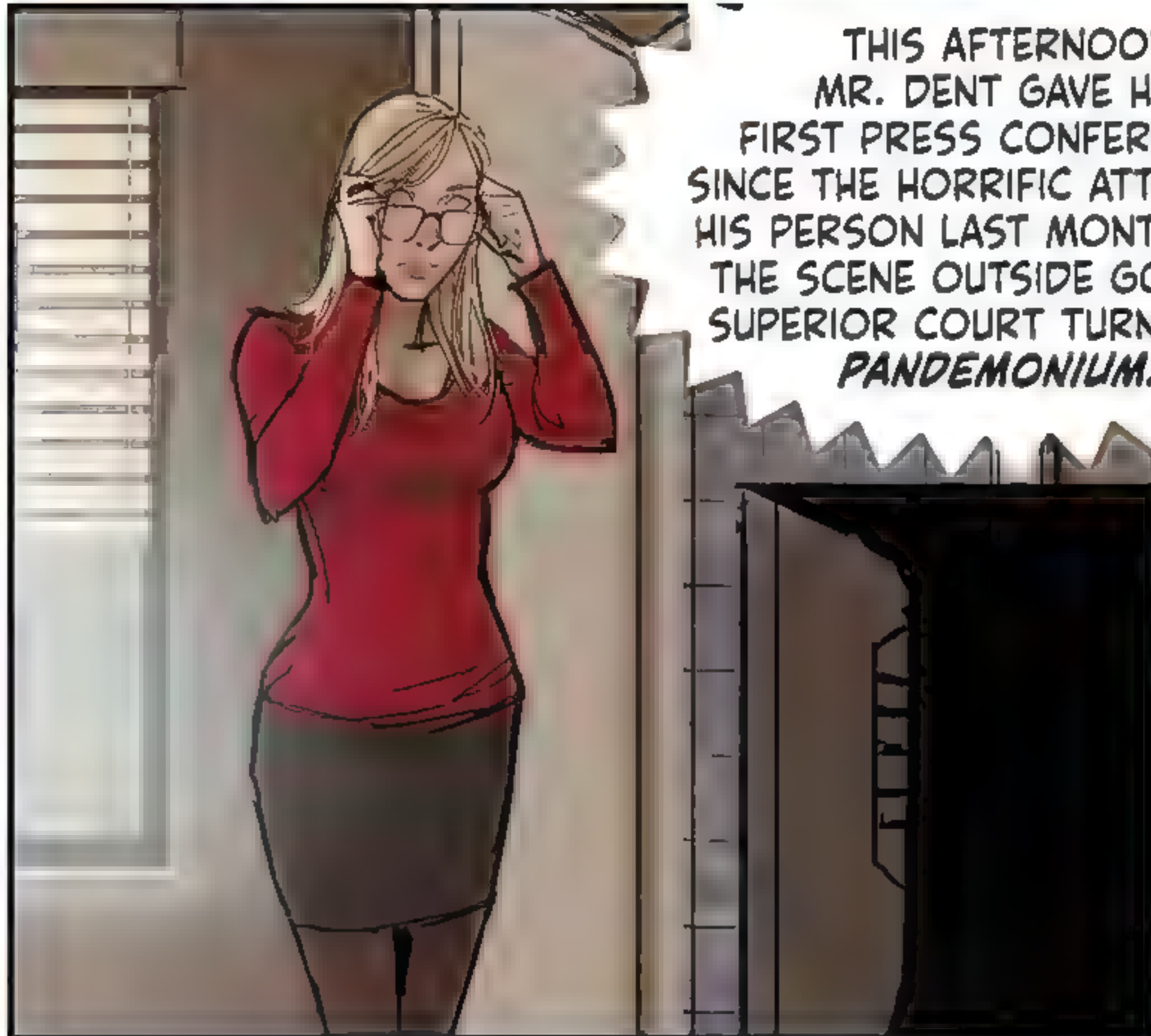
SEE...THE **FEAR** WAS GONE, BUT IT WAS REPLACED WITH SOMETHING **WAY** MORE UNSETTLING.

I WAS ABOUT ONE MORE SLEEPLESS WEEK AWAY FROM JUST ABANDONING IT ALL...

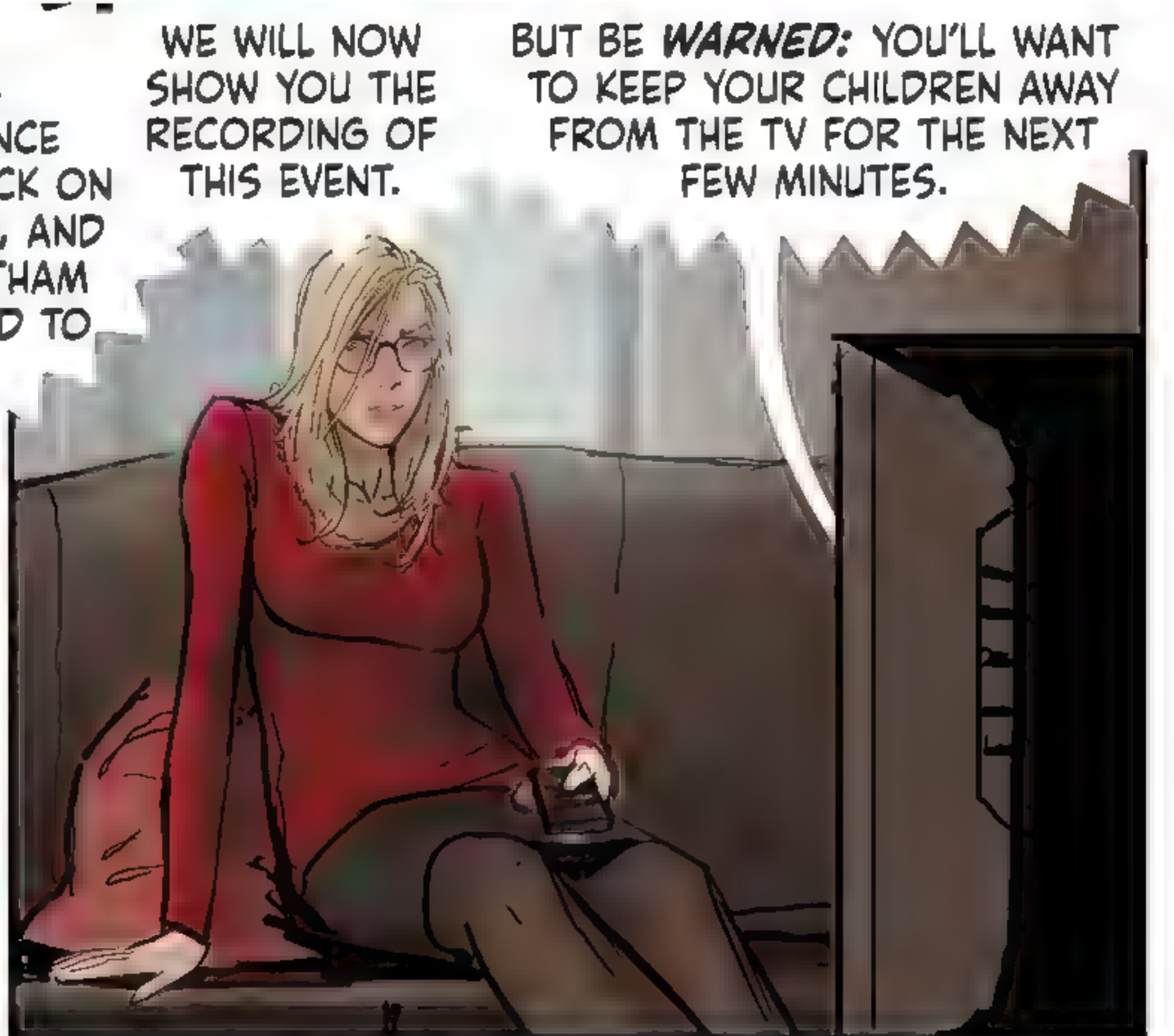


WHY DIDN'T I? WELL, BELIEVE IT OR NOT, IT WAS **ONCE AGAIN** BECAUSE OF...

GOTHAM'S D.A. HARVEY DENT IS **ONCE AGAIN** THE TOPIC OF THE DAY!



THIS AFTERNOON MR. DENT GAVE HIS FIRST PRESS CONFERENCE SINCE THE HORRIFIC ATTACK ON HIS PERSON LAST MONTH, AND THE SCENE OUTSIDE GOTHAM SUPERIOR COURT TURNED TO **PANDEMONIUM**.



WE WILL NOW SHOW YOU THE RECORDING OF THIS EVENT.

BUT BE **WARNED**: YOU'LL WANT TO KEEP YOUR CHILDREN AWAY FROM THE TV FOR THE NEXT FEW MINUTES.



THIS **WILL** BE UNCOMFORTABLE TO WATCH.



MR. DENT! **WHY** DID THE LATE CRIME BOSS SALVATORE MARONI TRY TO **KILL** YOU?



SAL MARONI INITIALLY APPROACHED ME AS A BUSINESSMAN WANTING TO SUPPORT MY CAMPAIGN FOR DISTRICT ATTORNEY. I ACCEPTED HIS HELP.

HE SEEMED SINCERE, AND I HAD NO REASON TO DOUBT HIS INTENTIONS.



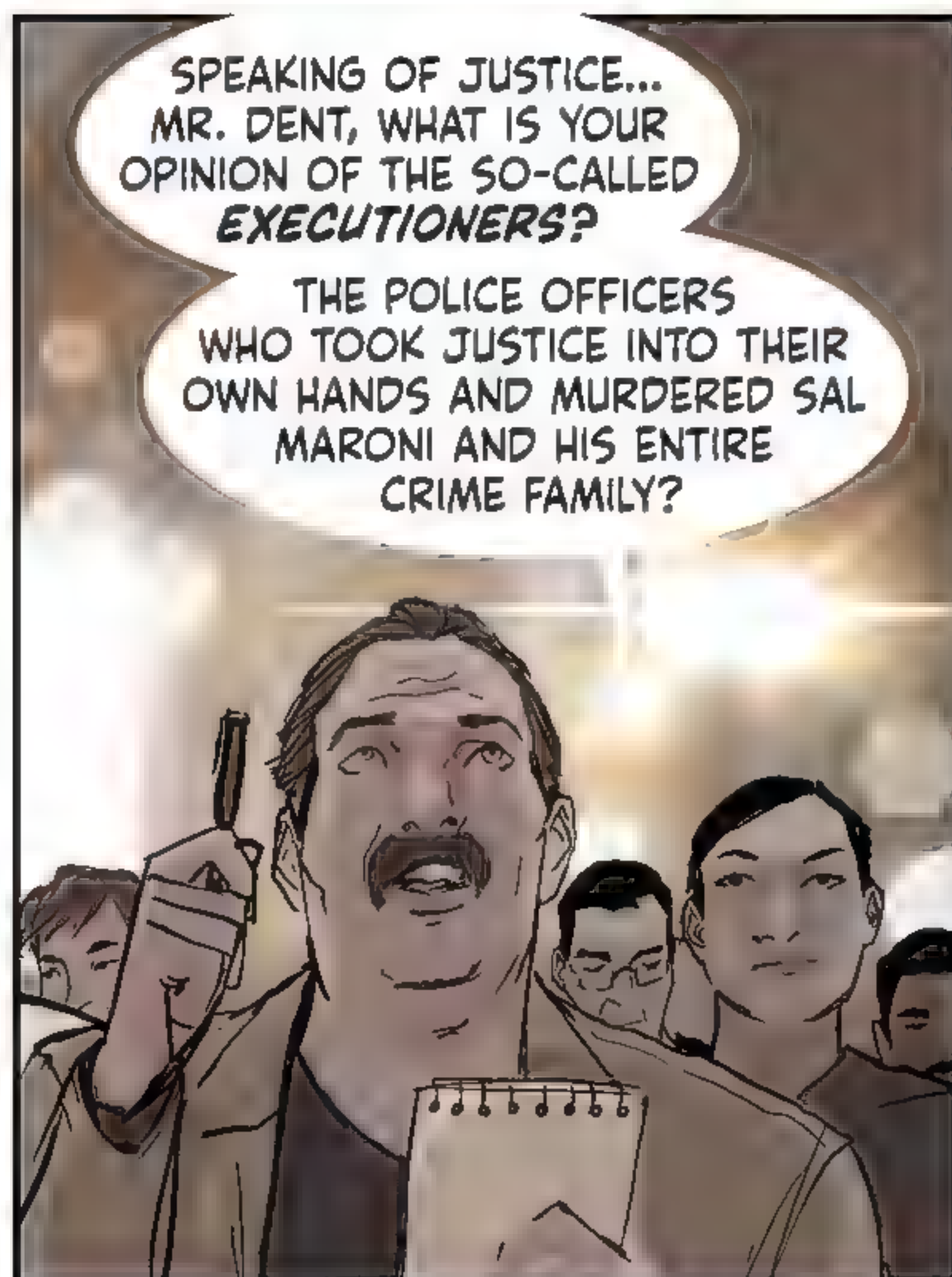
AFTER THE ELECTION, MY OFFICE REVEALED OVER THE COURSE OF MANY PROSECUTIONS THAT MARONI HAD TIES TO **ORGANIZED CRIME**.

ONE SUCH CASE INVOLVED HIS **OWN SON**, WHOM WE CHARGED AS AN ACCOMPLICE TO **MURDER**.

MARONI BELIEVED THAT BECAUSE HE'D BACKED MY CAMPAIGN HE COULD **PRESSURE ME** TO DROP THE CHARGES.

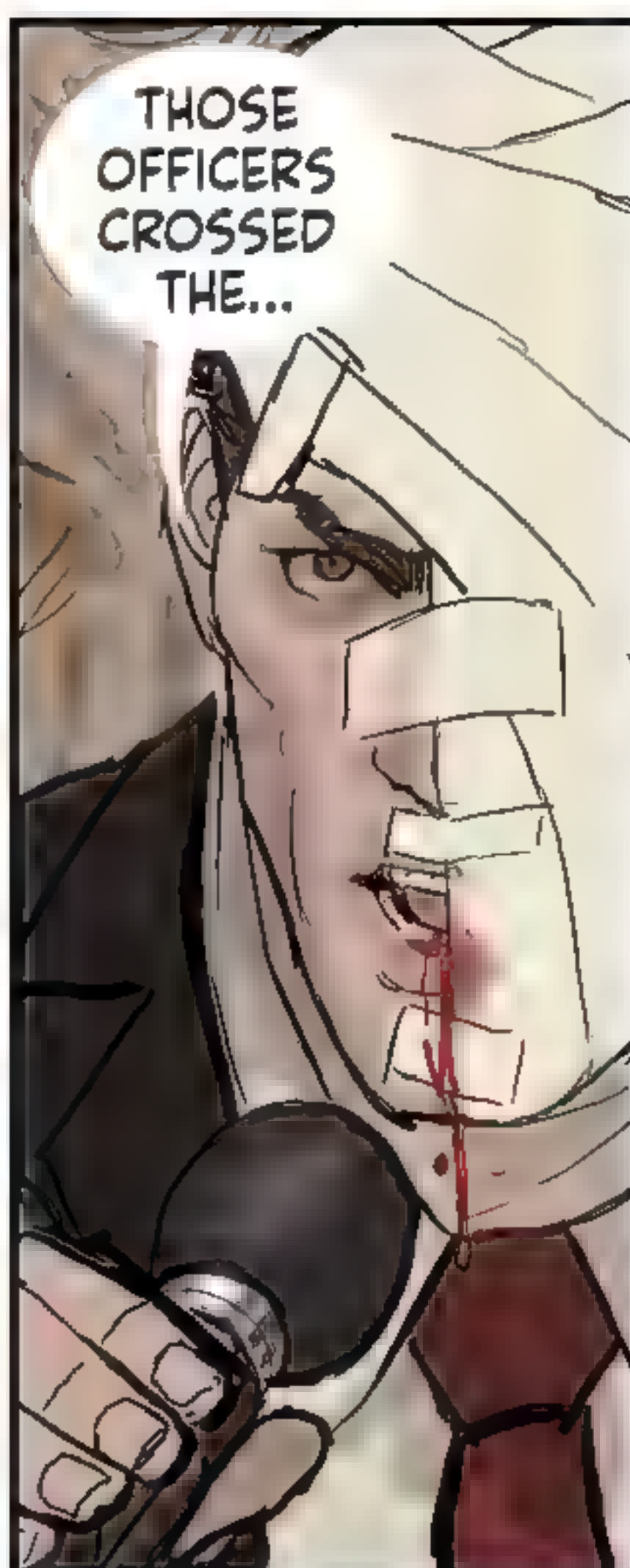
HE WAS **WRONG**. I MADE IT ABUNDANTLY CLEAR: JUSTICE IS **NOT FOR SALE**.

UMBERTO MARONI WAS KILLED IN PRISON, AND HIS FATHER HAS BLAMED ME EVER SINCE.



SPEAKING OF JUSTICE... MR. DENT, WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF THE SO-CALLED **EXECUTIONERS**?

THE POLICE OFFICERS WHO TOOK JUSTICE INTO THEIR OWN HANDS AND MURDERED SAL MARONI AND HIS ENTIRE CRIME FAMILY?



THOSE OFFICERS CROSSED THE...



THOSE...THOSE OFFICERS... THEY...



THOSE OFFICERS ARE **DAMNED HEROES** IN MY BOOK!



UM...YOU WANT TO **CLARIFY** THAT?



I'M TERRIBLY SORRY. MR. DENT IS STILL SUFFERING THE EFFECTS OF--

NO! TO HELL WITH ALL THAT!

HARVEY, PLEASE...



I READ YOUR NEWSPAPERS. MOST OF YOU BENT OVER BACKWARD TO PORTRAY MARONI AS SOME MISGUIDED SOUL!

A GRIEVING FATHER!

MARONI WAS A COLD-BLOODED

KILLER!

WE TREAT THESE MONSTERS WITH **DECENCY** AND THIS IS WHAT WE GET!

I AM A
GOD-FEARING MAN
BUT IF WE KEEP TURNING
THE OTHER CHEEK WE'LL
RUN OUT OF CHEEKS!

THE EXECUTIONERS
CRUSHED THOSE ROACHES
THE WAY FECKLESS
POLITICIANS NEVER
COULD!

THE WAY
THAT NOT EVEN
THE BATMAN
COULD!

AND EVEN
THOUGH NONE OF
YOU WILL ADMIT IT,
YOU **KNOW** I'M
RIGHT!

THERE IS
A **CANCER** IN
GOTHAM, AND THE
ONLY WAY TO CURE
IT IS BY **CARRYING**
IT OUT!





THERE IS NO
RECOVERY AND NO
REHABILITATION FOR
THESE PREDATORS!
DO YOU
HONESTLY THINK
THEY CAN
CHANGE?
ARE YOU THAT
DELUSIONAL?

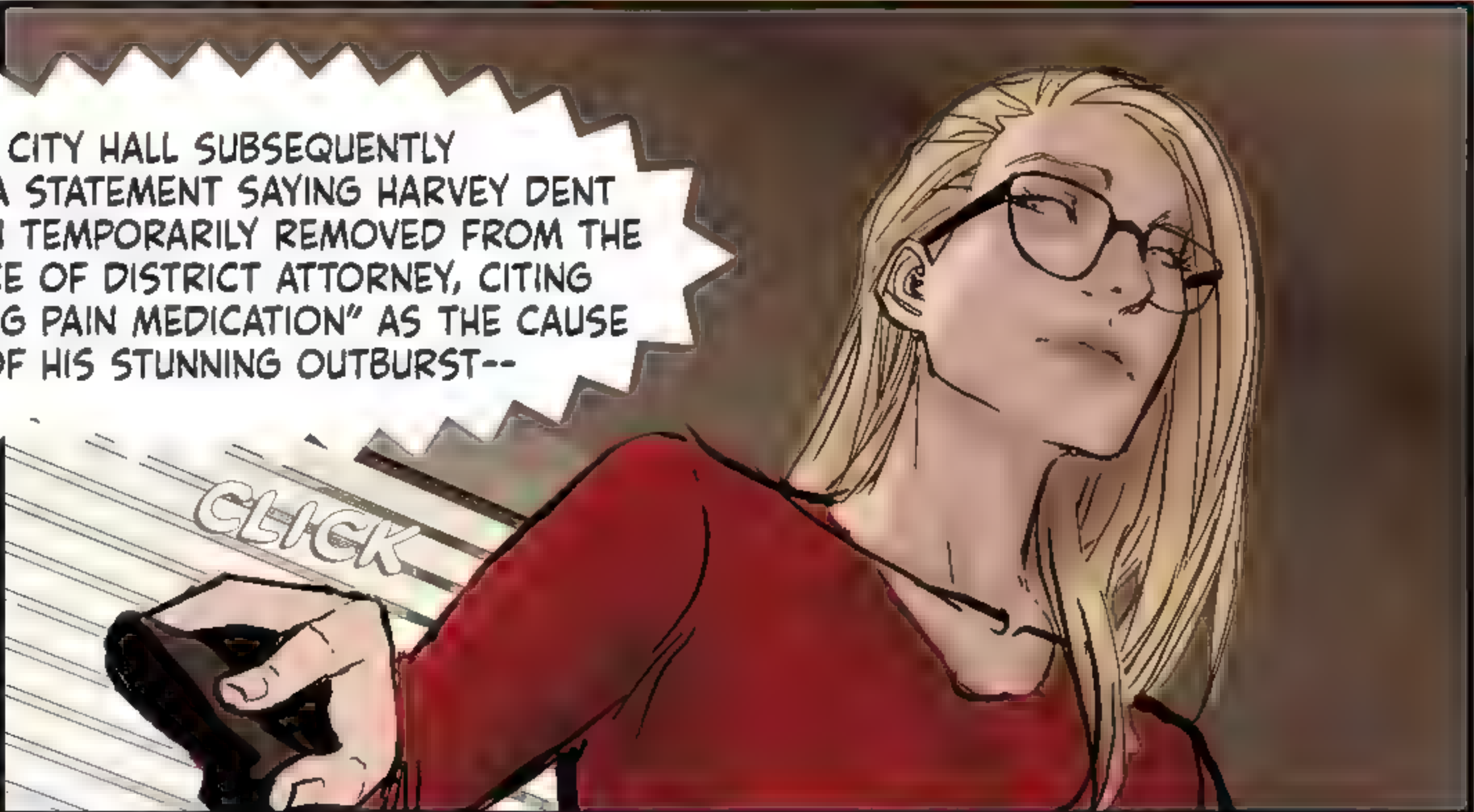
KILLER CROC?
FREEZE? POISON
IVY? JOKER?
YOU
REALLY THINK
THEY CAN BE
HELPED?

THEY ARE
REMORSELESS.
COLD,
UNCARING...

MONSTERS.



WE HAVE TO STOP
HERE, AS MR. DENT'S SPEECH
DEVOLVES INTO A **TORRENT**
OF PROFANITY AIMED
AT THE CITY COUNCIL.



CITY HALL SUBSEQUENTLY
ISSUED A STATEMENT SAYING HARVEY DENT
HAS BEEN TEMPORARILY REMOVED FROM THE
OFFICE OF DISTRICT ATTORNEY, CITING
"STRONG PAIN MEDICATION" AS THE CAUSE
OF HIS STUNNING OUTBURST--



A MONTH AGO I WOULD HAVE BEEN OUTRAGED.
I WOULD HAVE YELLED AT THE TELEVISION, FOR
ALL THE GOOD THAT WOULD HAVE DONE.
BUT NOT THAT DAY.

THAT DAY I WAS **TIRED**. TIRED ENOUGH TO
STOP CARING. TIRED ENOUGH FOR DENT'S
SERMON OF FEAR TO MAKE **SENSE** TO ME.

TIRED OF... EVERYTHING.

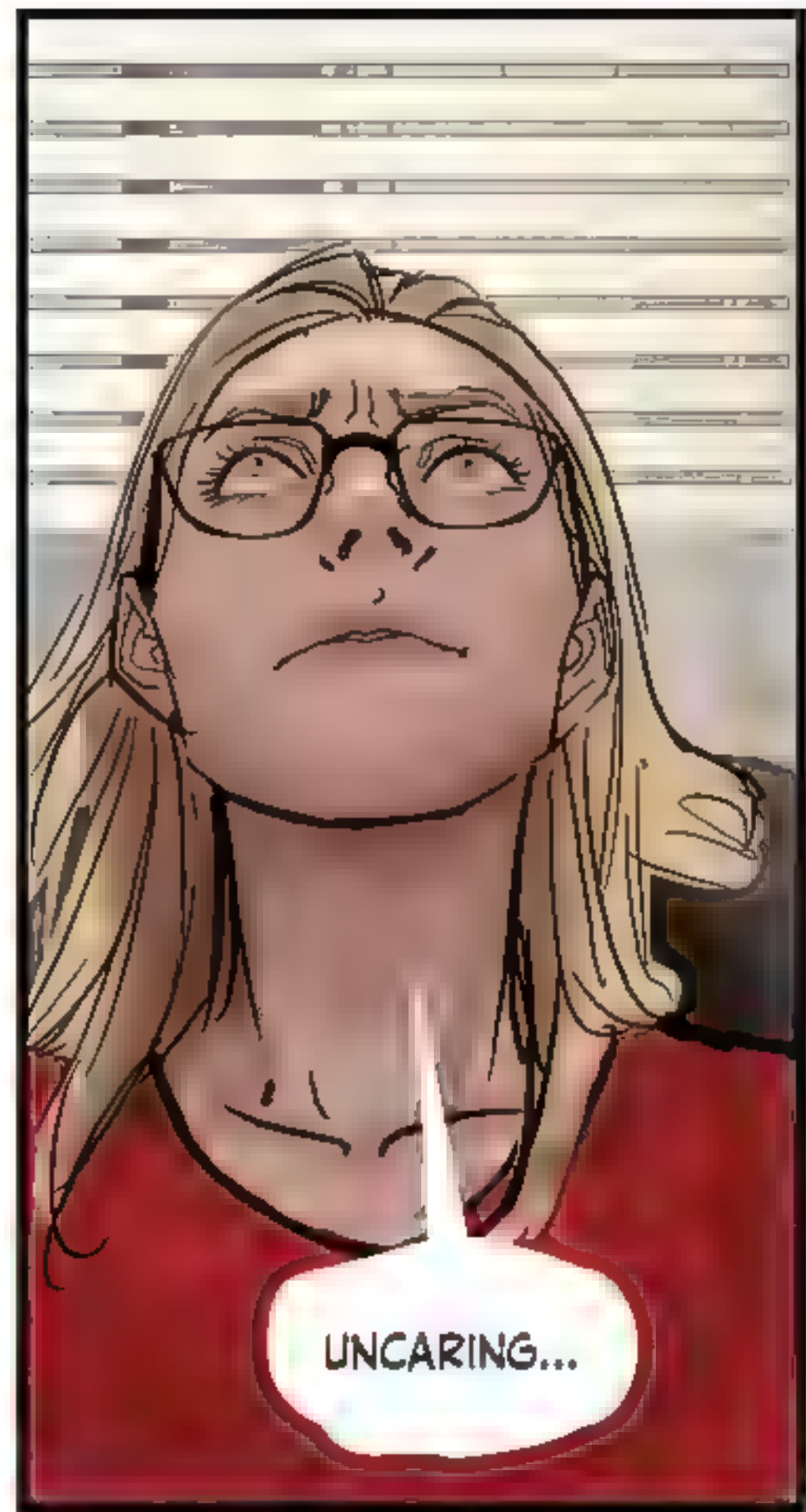
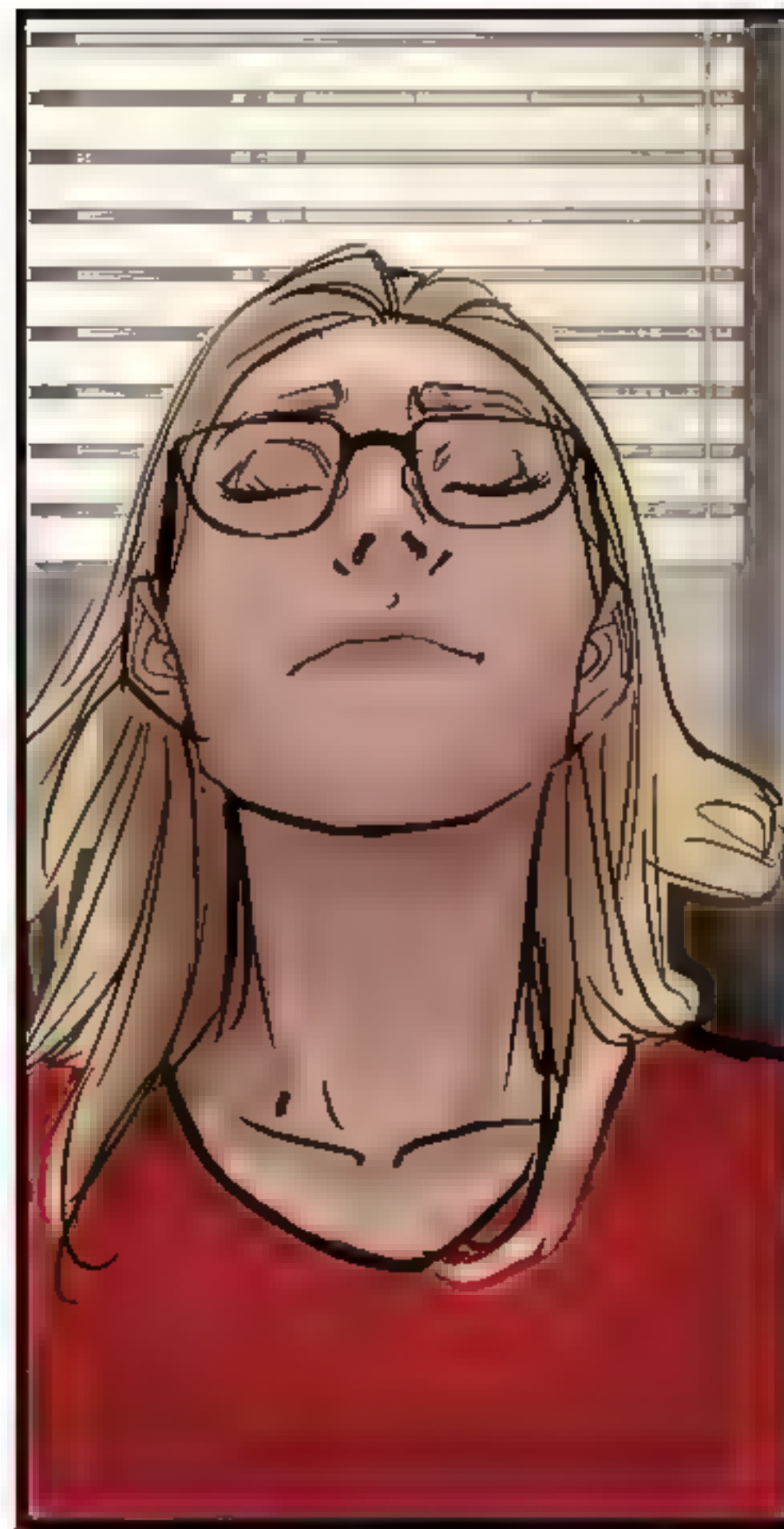


TIRED OF ARKHAM.

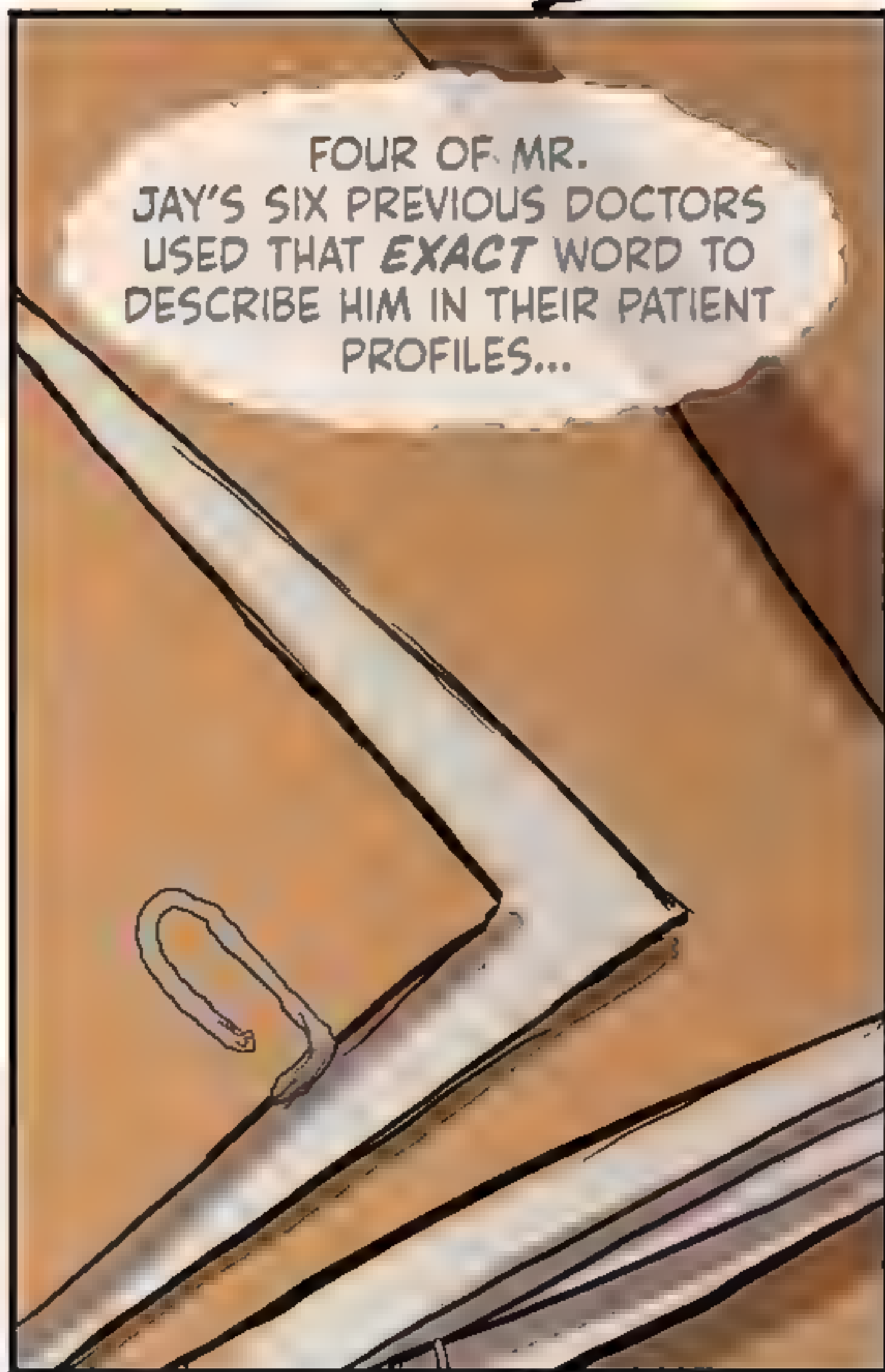
TIRED OF HIM.

MY GREAT TORMENTOR.
WHY WOULD I EVER WANT
TO DEAL WITH HIM AGAIN?

WHAT WAS IT DENT CALLED HIM?
REMORSELESS, COLD, UNCARING...



UNCARING...



FOUR OF MR.
JAY'S SIX PREVIOUS DOCTORS
USED THAT *EXACT* WORD TO
DESCRIBE HIM IN THEIR PATIENT
PROFILES...



ALL SIX OF
THEM CLAIM HE'S
INCAPABLE OF FEELING
REAL EMOTIONS.



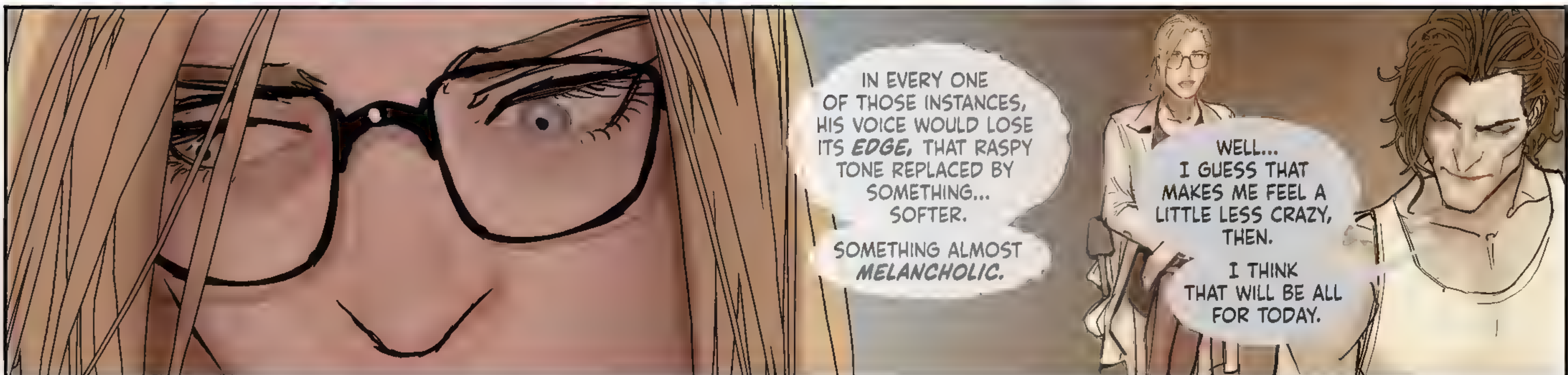
BUT...
THAT'S NOT
TRUE.



AND WHAT
DO YOU DREAM
OF?

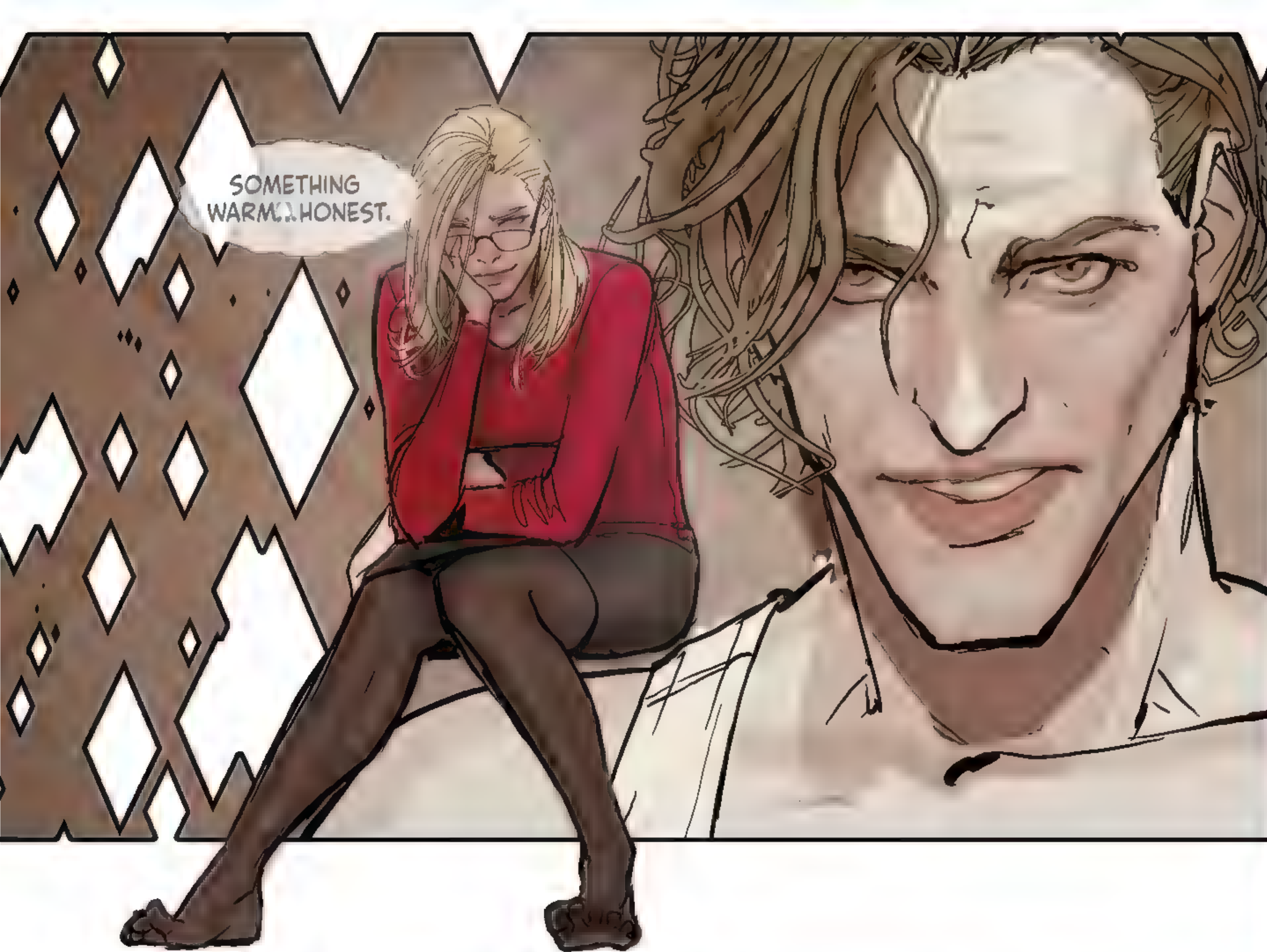
I'VE *SEEN* IT.
SURE, IT HAPPENED RARELY,
BUT EVERY NOW AND THEN HIS
MASK WOULD *SLIP* FOR
A MOMENT...

OH...SIMPLE
STUFF...HONEST
SMILES...

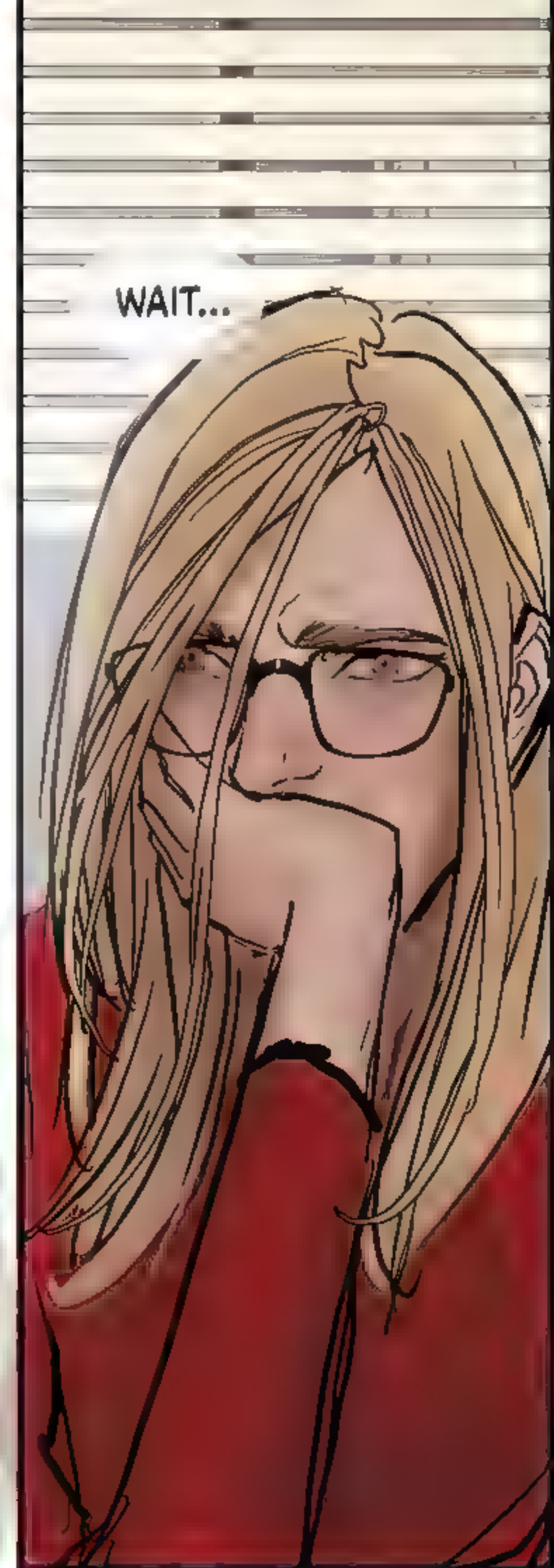
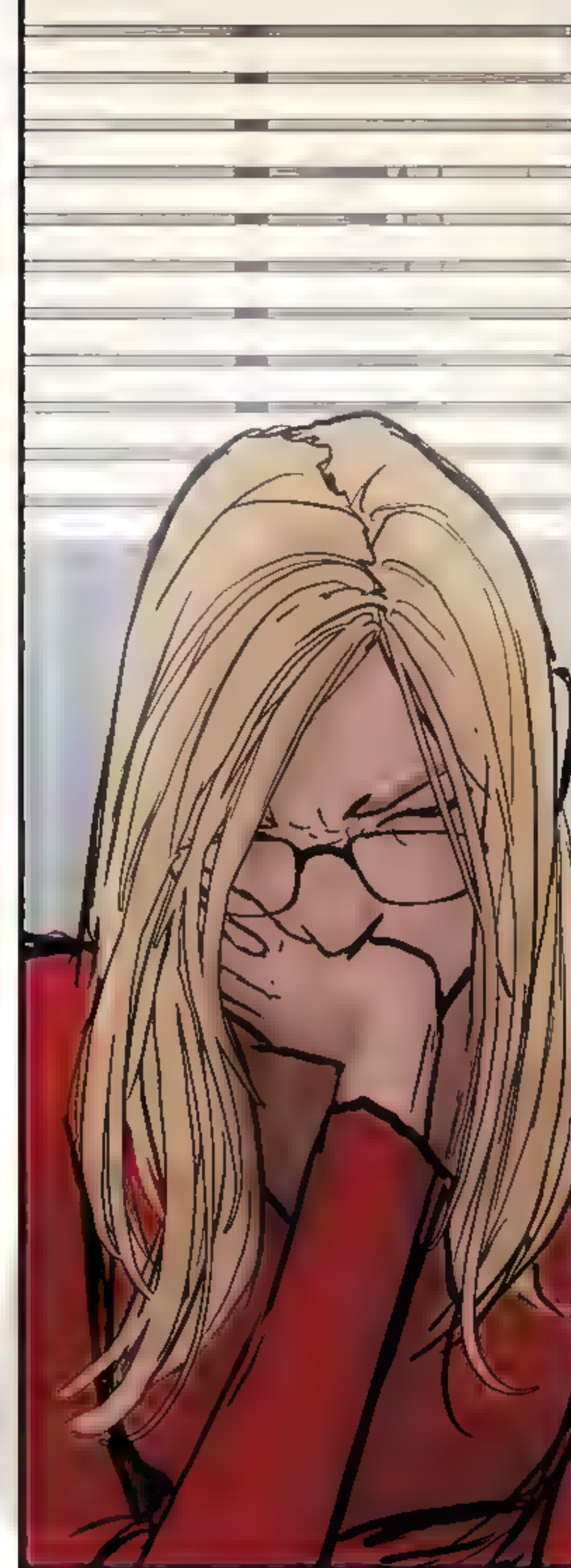


IN EVERY ONE
OF THOSE INSTANCES,
HIS VOICE WOULD LOSE
ITS *EDGE*, THAT RASPY
TONE REPLACED BY
SOMETHING...
SOFTER.
SOMETHING ALMOST
MELANCHOLIC.

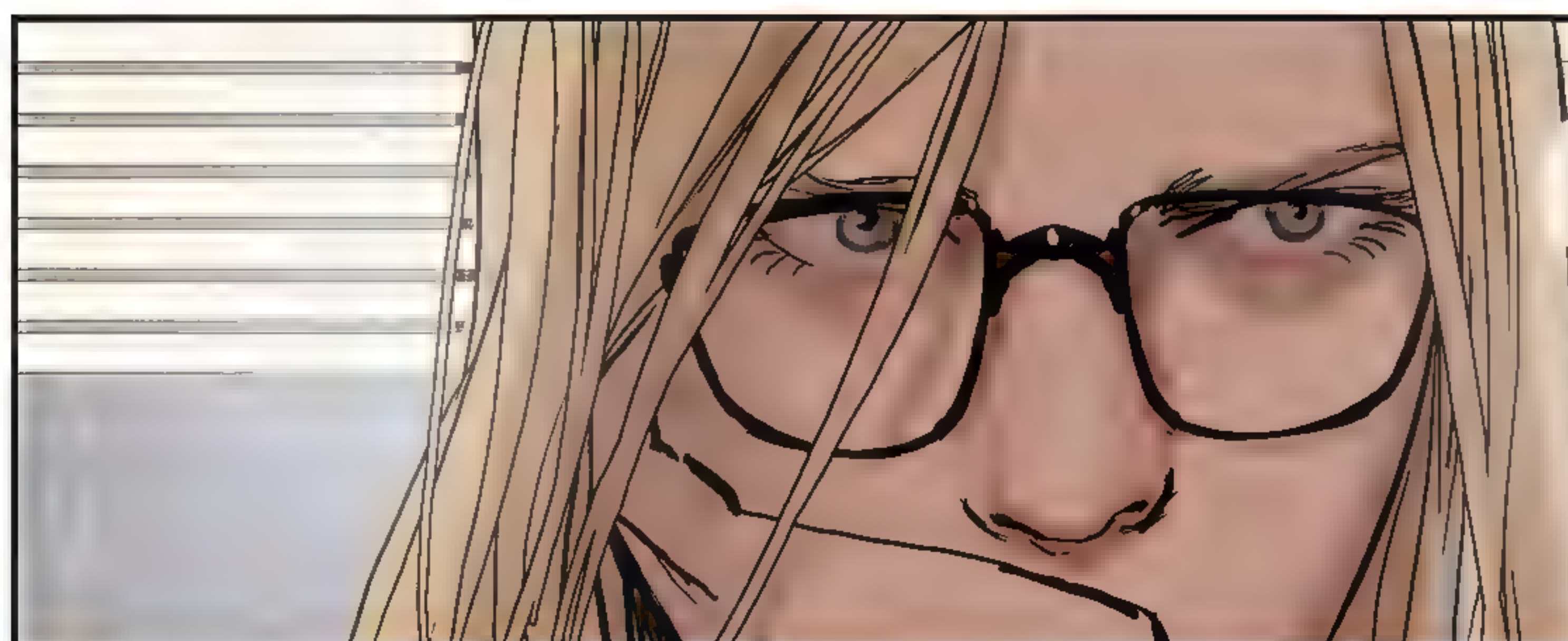
WELL...
I GUESS THAT
MAKES ME FEEL A
LITTLE LESS CRAZY,
THEN.
I THINK
THAT WILL BE ALL
FOR TODAY.



SOMETHING WARM...HONEST.



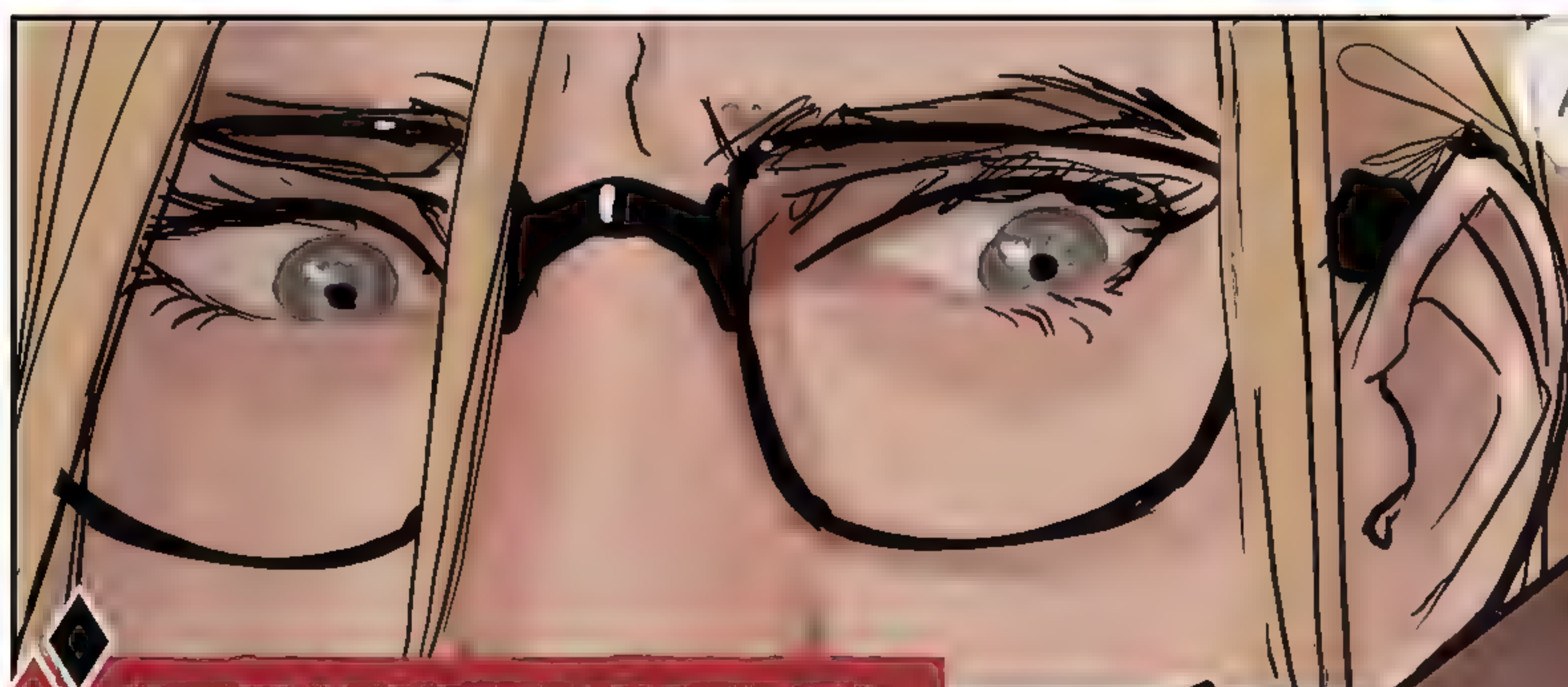
WAIT...



THAT MEANS HE **TRICKED** SIX DIFFERENT PSYCHIATRISTS INTO BELIEVING HE WAS THAT **FAR GONE**.

EITHER HE'S **THAT** GOOD AT LYING, OR THEY WERE **THAT** FOOLISH, OR...

OR THEY DIDN'T EVEN CARE!



IS THAT WHAT **HUGO STRANGE** MEANT?

IN ALL HONESTY, I THINK YOURS IS JUST ONE OF MANY **CRACKPOT** THEORIES I'VE SEEN IDEALISTIC YOUNG PSYCHIATRISTS BRING TO THE TABLE LOOKING FOR THE **HOWS** AND **WHYS** OF OUR... RESIDENTS.



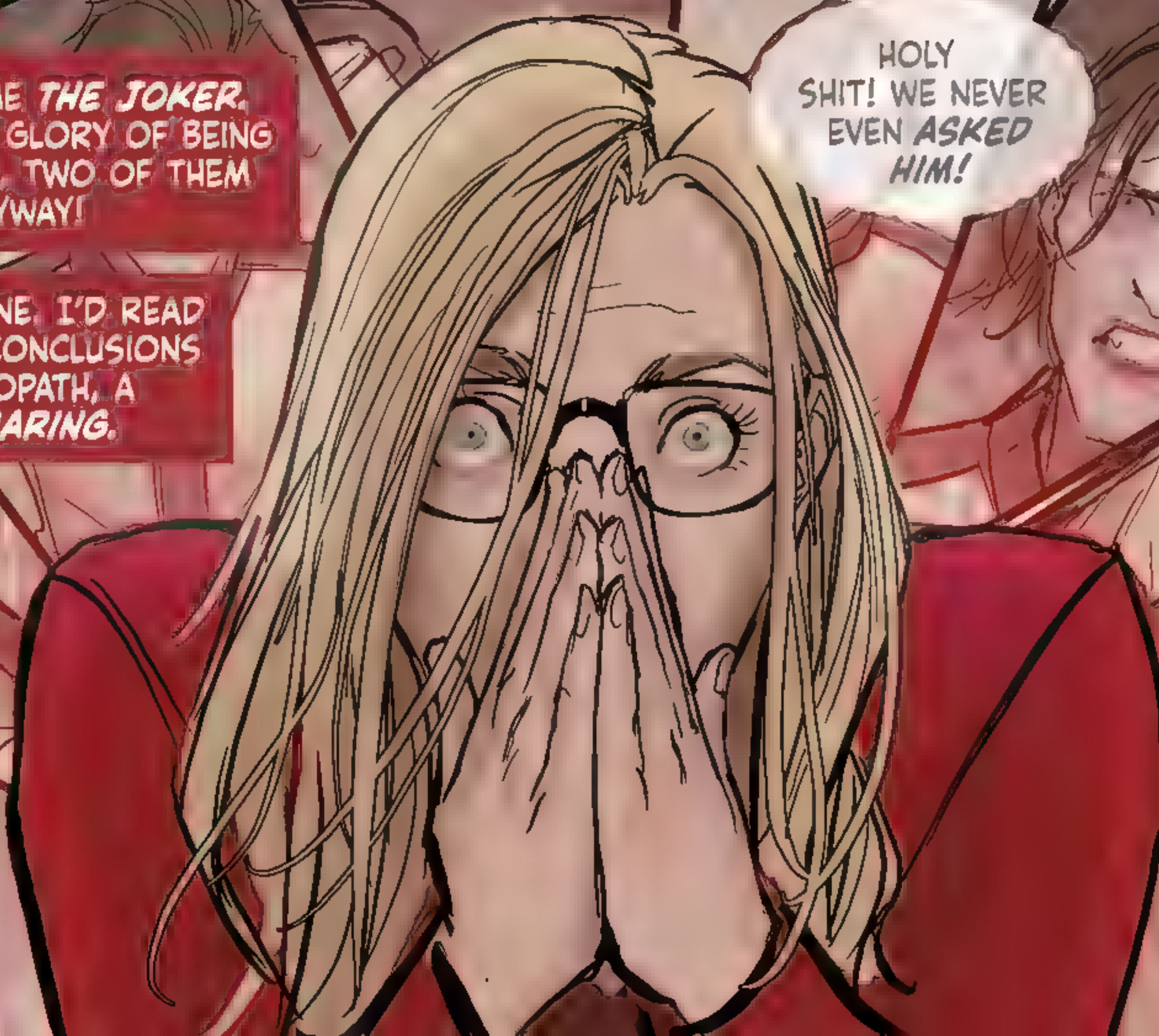
SUDDENLY I REMEMBERED THE VIDEOTAPES, THE INTERVIEWS, ALL THE QUESTIONS ASKED... AND THE **ONE** THAT WASN'T. NOT EVEN ONCE.

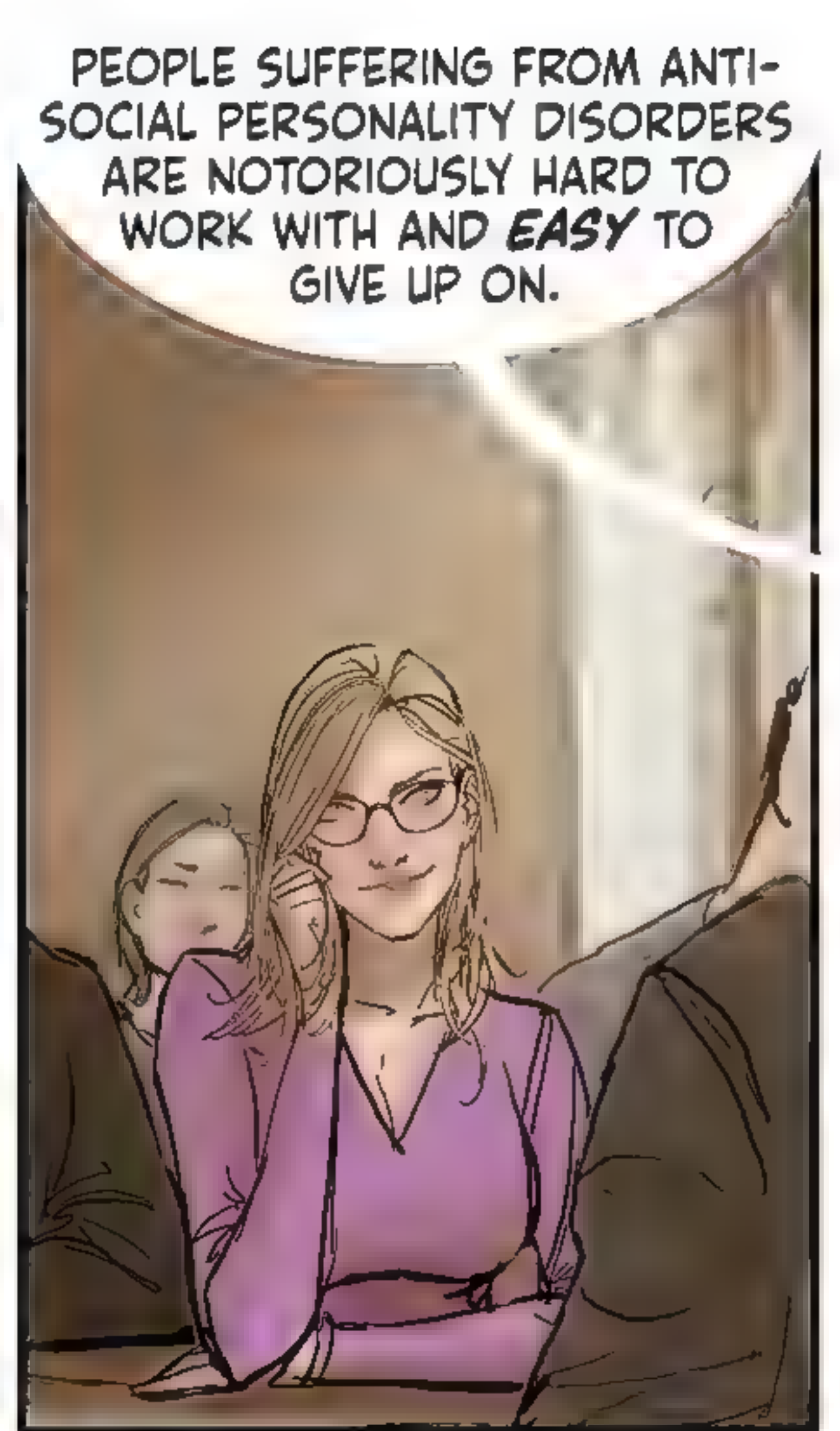
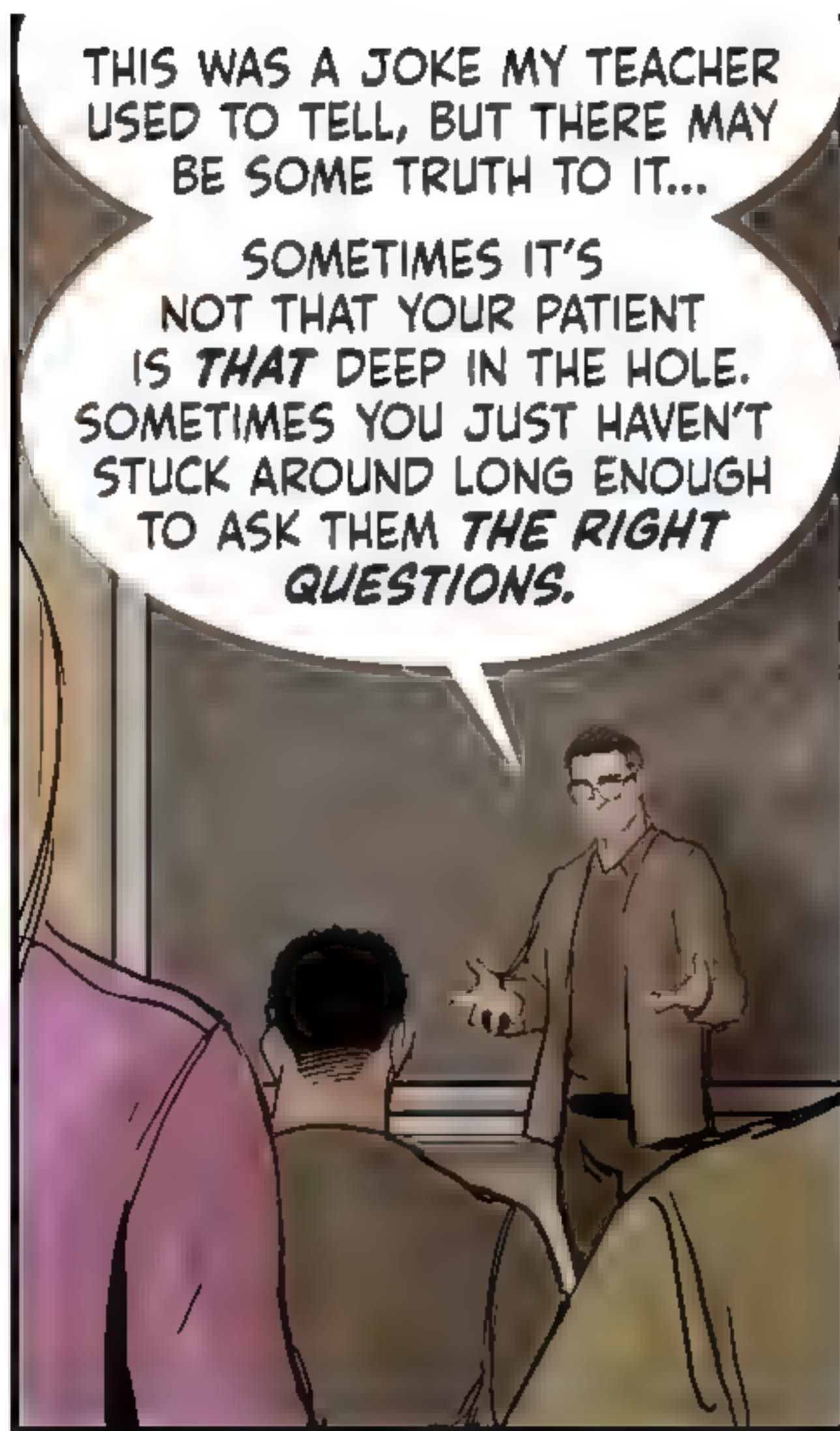
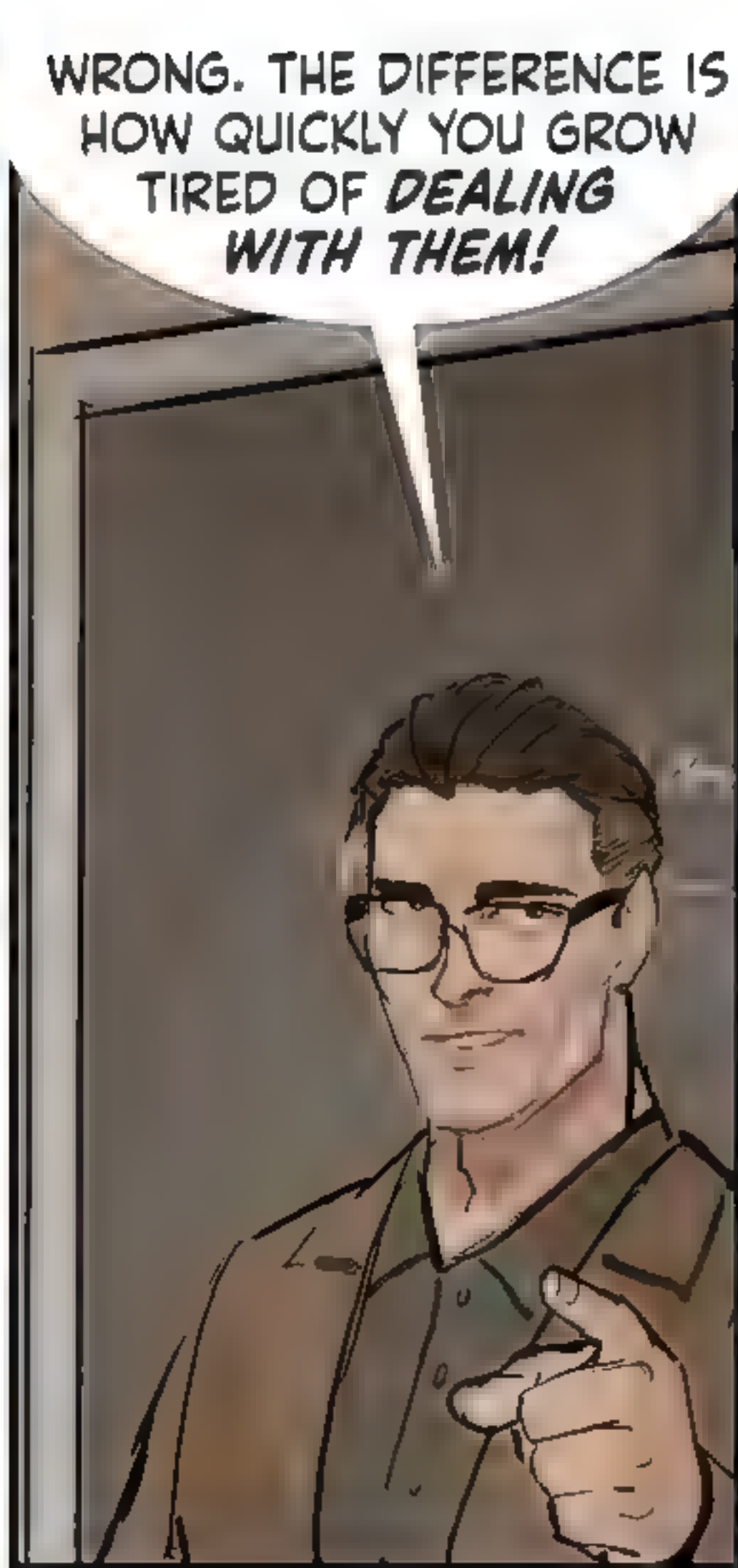
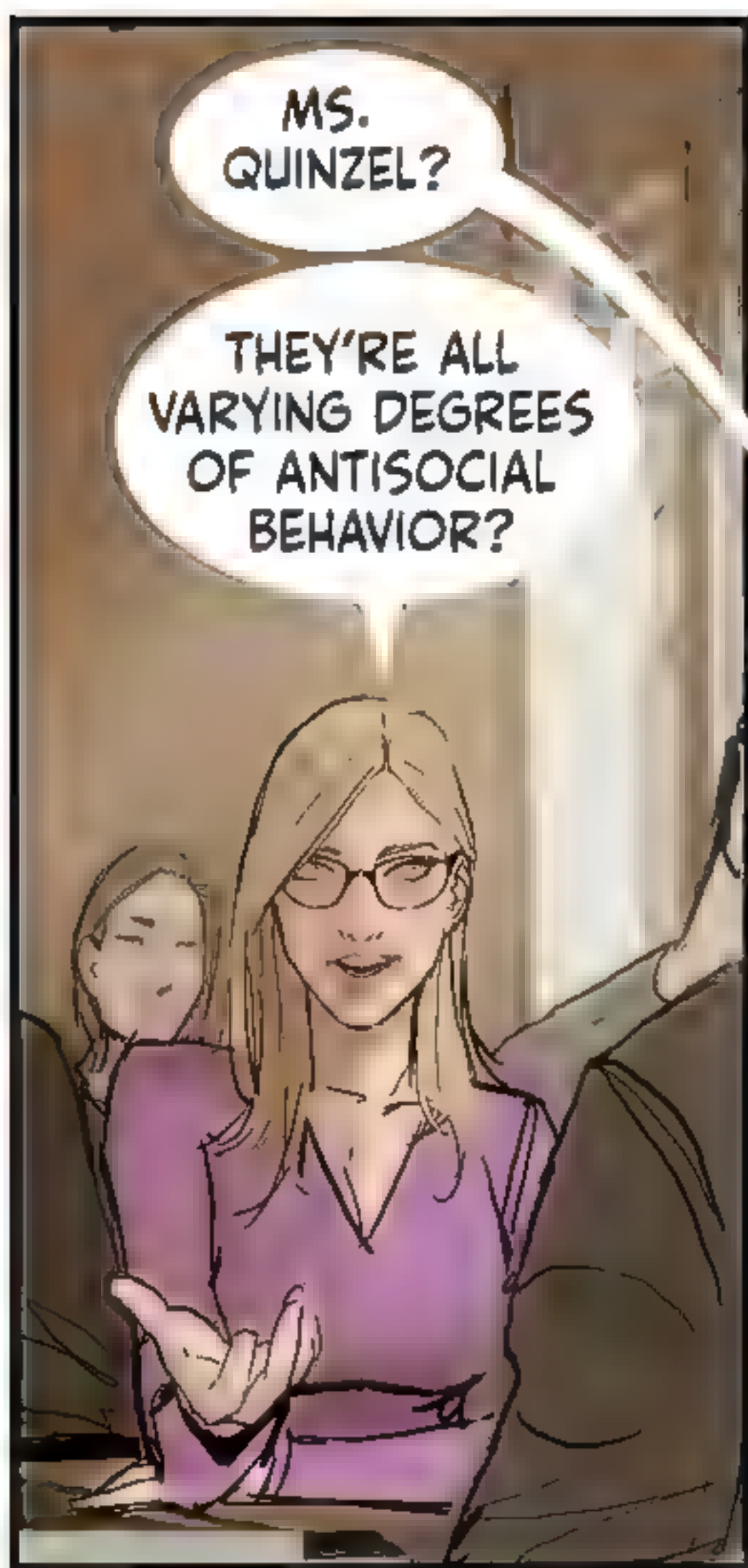
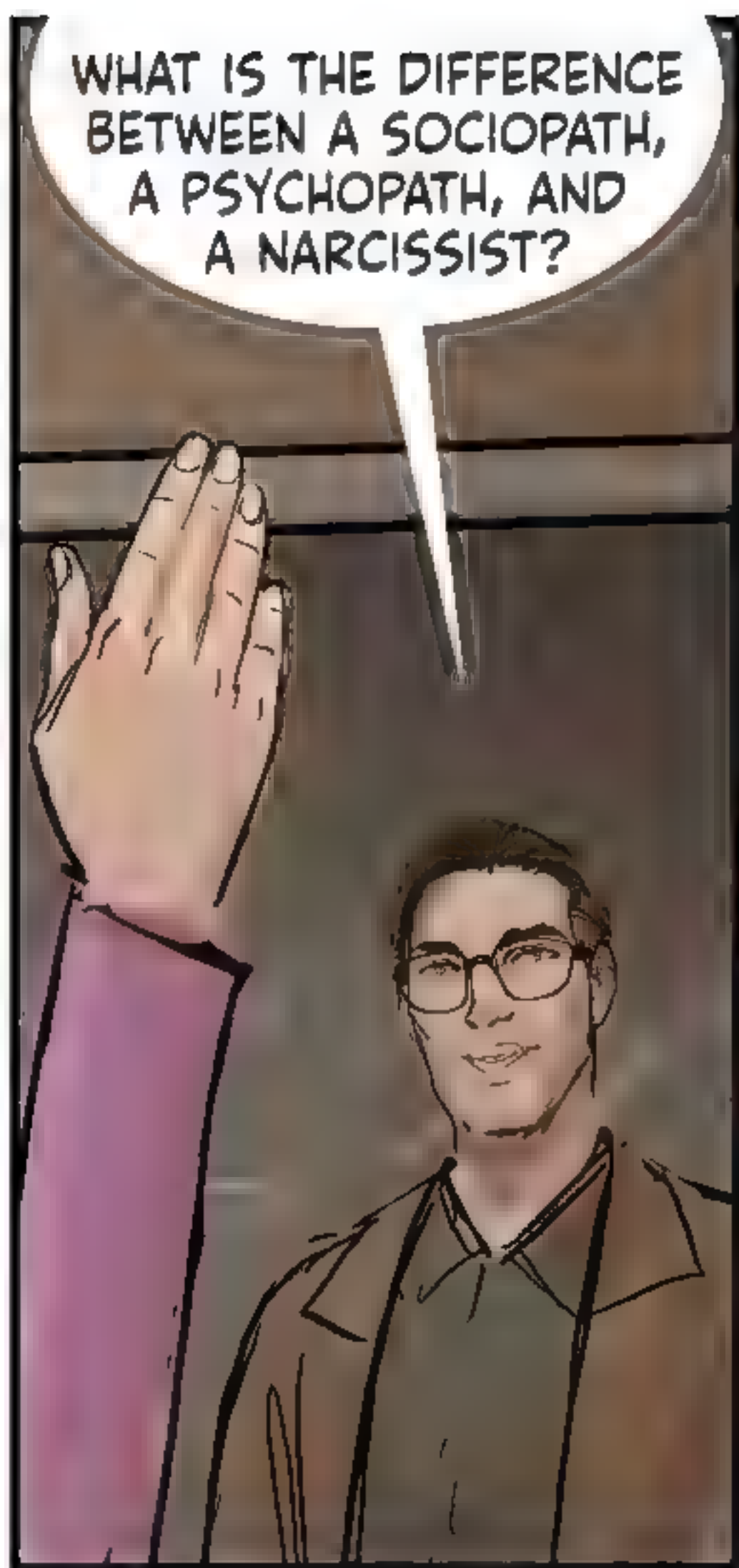
SIX DIFFERENT DOCTORS ASKED HIM HOW HE BECAME **THE JOKER**. THE BACKSTORY OF IT ALL. THEY WERE CHASING THE GLORY OF BEING THE ONE WHO FINALLY **SOLVED THE PUZZLE**. HELL, TWO OF THEM FAILED AND WROTE BOOKS ABOUT IT ANYWAY!

AND I WAS NO BETTER, JUST THE SEVENTH IN LINE. I'D READ THEIR CONFLICTING PROFILES AND TOOK THEIR CONCLUSIONS FOR GRANTED. I TOO THOUGHT HIM A SOCIOPATH, A NARCISSIST, AND, OH YES, DEFINITELY **UNCARING**.

BUT WE WERE ALL SO PREOCCUPIED WITH THE WHY OF THE JOKER THAT WE FORGOT THE MOST BASIC QUESTION. THE **MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION**.

HOLY SHIT! WE NEVER EVEN **ASKED HIM!**







I AM FINE,
MR. JAY.

NOW. I HAVE
JUST *ONE QUESTION*
FOR YOU.



ALL RIGHT...SHOOT,
DOC!

WHAT DO
YOU WANT
TO KNOW?



DO YOU EVER
FEEL REMORSE FOR
THE LIVES YOU'VE
TAKEN?



REALLY?

COME ON,
DOC.

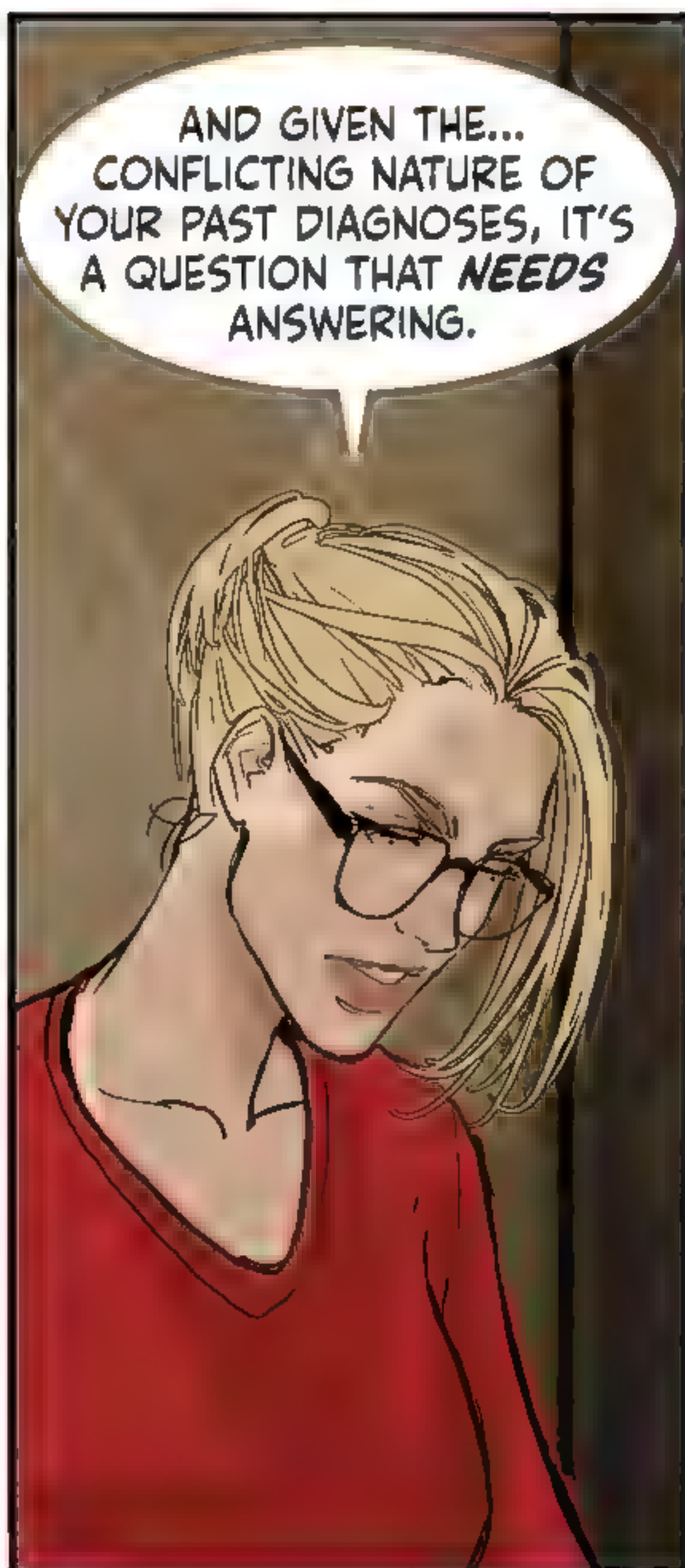
YOU'VE
READ MY FILES.
"A NARCISSISTIC
SOCIOPATH."

"A HEARTLESS
PSYCHOPATH."

"A CLASSIC CASE
OF AN ANTISOCIAL"
SOMETHING-OR-
OTHER...



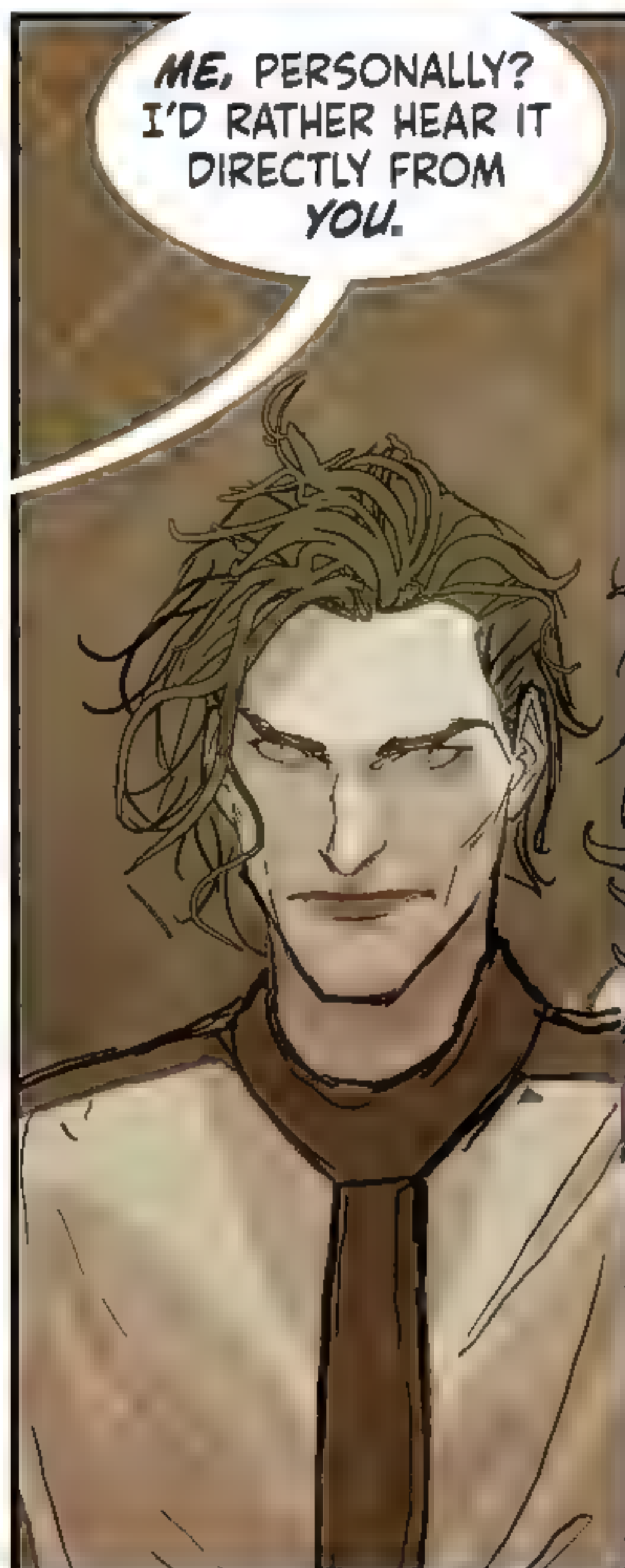
YES. I'VE READ YOUR FILES AND
I'VE SEEN THE VIDEO INTERVIEWS,
AND I NOTICED THAT NOBODY
EVER BOTHERED ASKING YOU
THAT QUESTION.



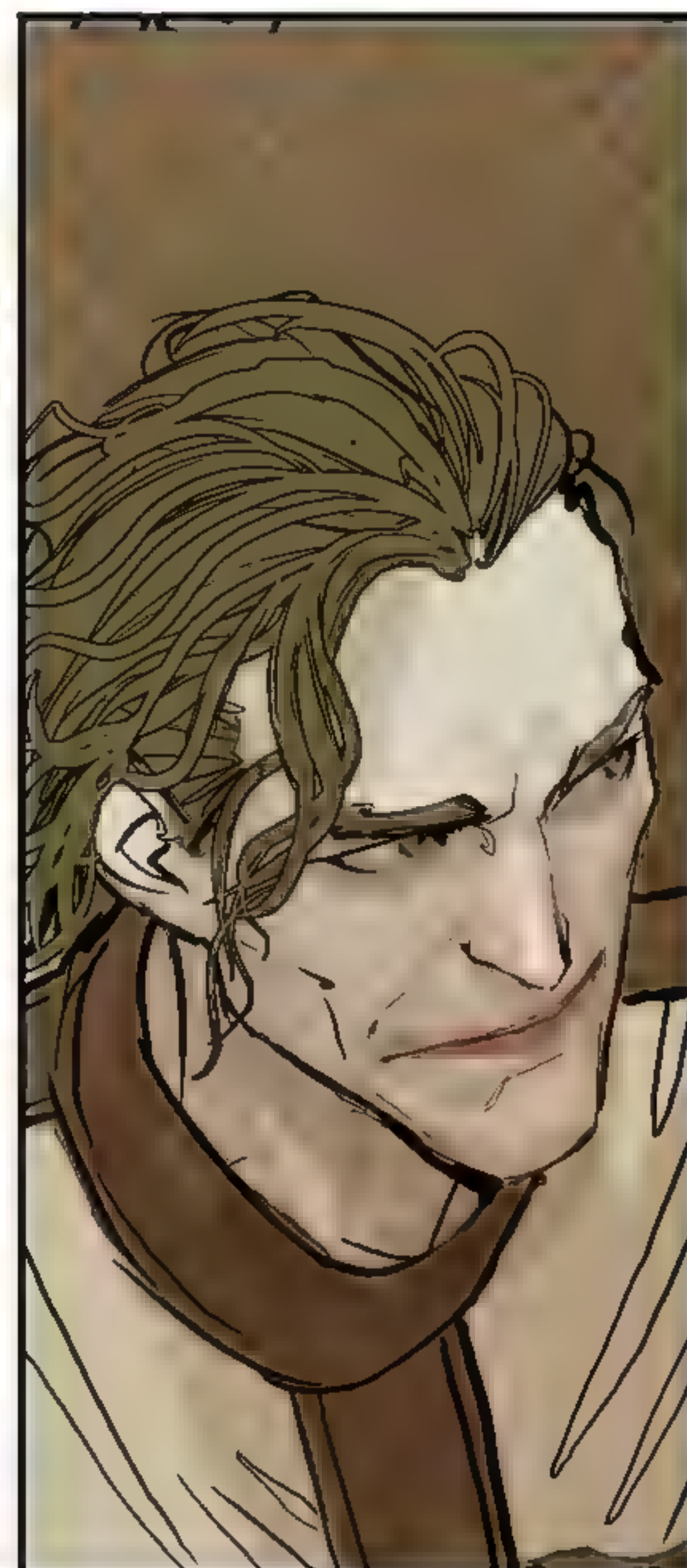
AND GIVEN THE...
CONFLICTING NATURE OF
YOUR PAST DIAGNOSES, IT'S
A QUESTION THAT *NEEDS*
ANSWERING.



NOW, MAYBE *MY*
PREDECESSORS JUST
ASSUMED YOUR ANSWER
WAS NO, I CAN'T SAY
FOR SURE.



ME, PERSONALLY?
I'D RATHER HEAR IT
DIRECTLY FROM
YOU.



FOR
THE FIRST ONES...
THERE WAS STILL
THAT.

I GUESS THE
FIRST VICTIM OF THE
STREETS OF GOTHAM IS
ONE'S *EMPATHY.*



W-WHAT?

I REMEMBER ENTERING THE ROOM THAT DAY, FEELING ON TOP OF THE WORLD. NO GLASS, NO NOTHING. I WAS READY FOR A FACE TO FACE.

I HAD MY LITTLE ICEBREAKER QUESTION. IT WAS A PLANNED MOVE. SHOW HIM SOMETHING HE WASN'T USED TO.

CATCH HIM *OFF GUARD*.

BUT INSTEAD HIS ANSWER DID THE SAME TO ME. ANY PRETENSE OF MY EMOTIONAL DETACHMENT WAS IN PIECES.



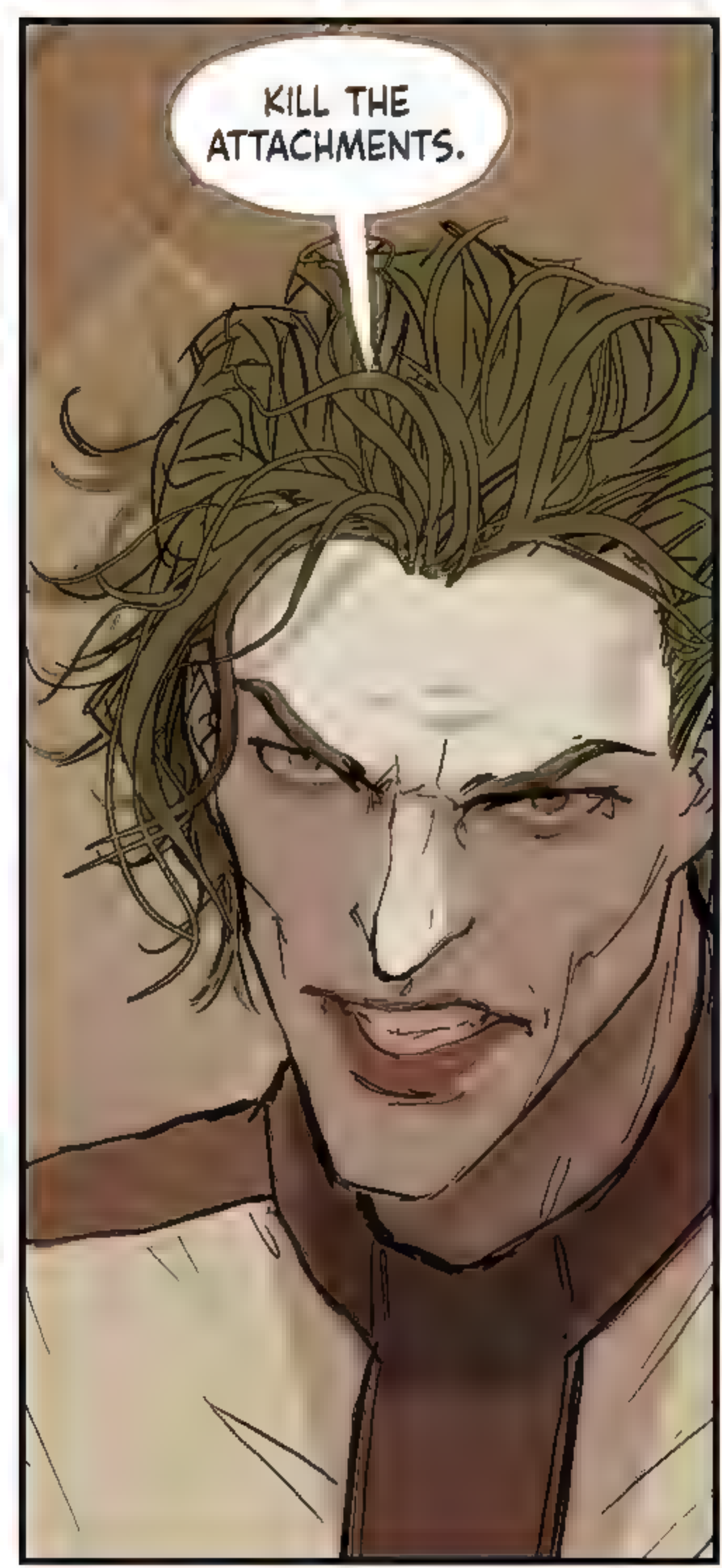
AND I COULDN'T BELIEVE MY EARS.

I MEAN...REGRET, GUILT...EMPATHY...THEY BRING ABOUT HESITATION. AND ON THE STREETS, HESITATION WILL GET YOU CAUGHT...GET YOU *KILLED*.

I ALWAYS FIGURED, WE KILLED *THAT* PART OF OURSELVES FIRST.



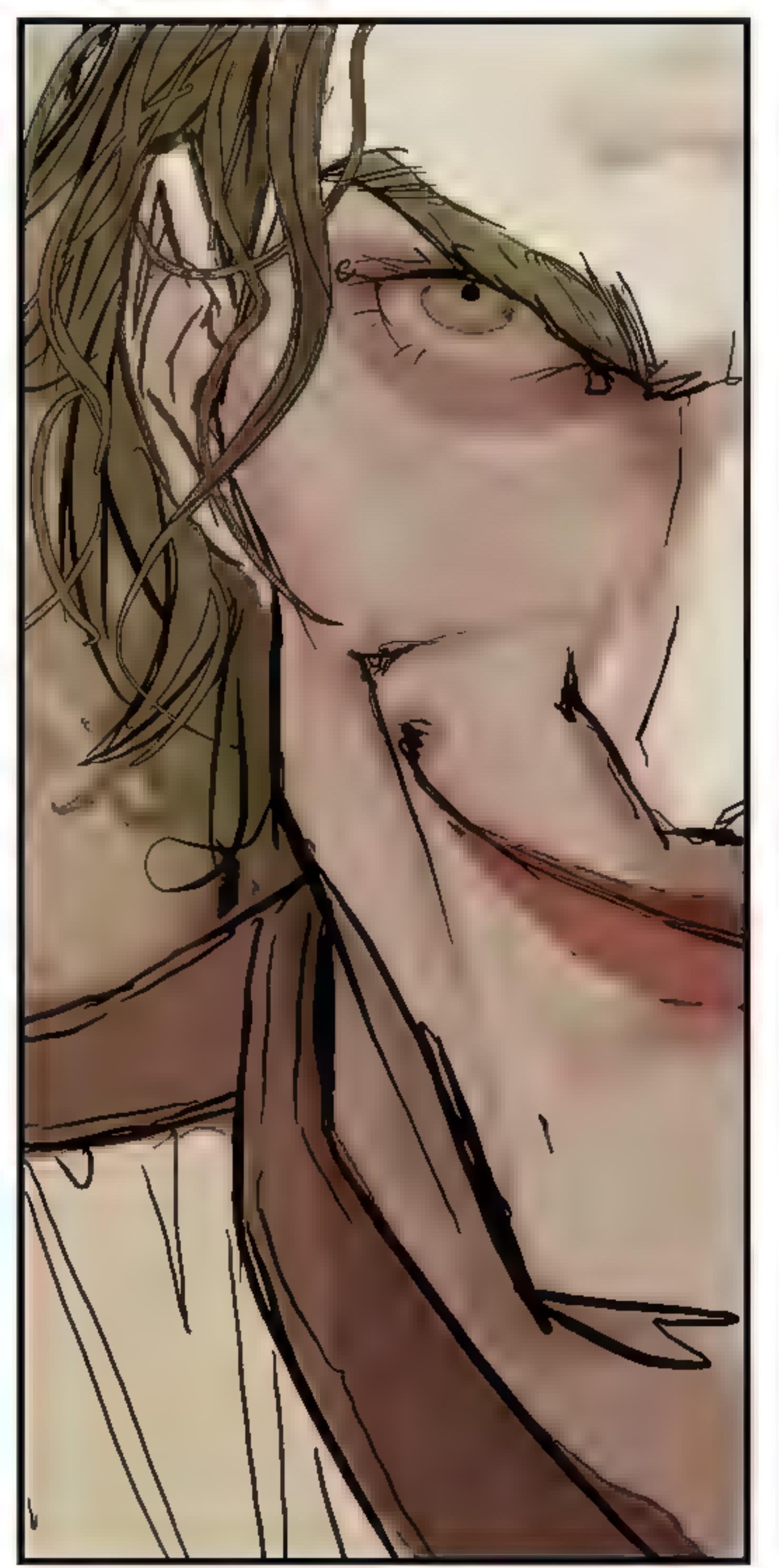
I HAD TO PLAY THIS CAREFULLY.



KILL THE ATTACHMENTS.



I HAD TO PLAY IT SMART.



IN HINDSIGHT I PLAYED IT NEITHER
SMART NOR CAREFULLY. INSTEAD
I JUST *TOOK THE BAIT*.

HOW
DID IT START,
MR. JAY?

MY, GRANDMA...WHAT *FASCINATING*
MENTAL ISSUES YOU HAVE.

THE BETTER TO *DRAW YOU*
NEAR, MY DARLING.

HOW DOES ONE
GO ABOUT KILLING THEIR
ATTACHMENTS...

YOU GET THAT
ONE BAD MOMENT WHEN THE
BURDEN OF THEM BECOMES
TOO MUCH...

WHEN
YOU LOSE IT
ALL...

IS THAT
WHAT HAPPENED
TO YOU?

IT DOESN'T
MATTER ANY-
MORE.

IT
DOES TO
ME.

OKAY...HOW ABOUT
YOU ANSWER ONE OF
MY QUESTIONS
FIRST?

FINE.

HOW OFTEN
DO YOU WATCH ME
SLEEP?

I DON'T EVEN KNOW
HOW TO DESCRIBE IT...

IT'S AS IF, WHEN I JOURNEYED INTO
HIS HEAD, I LEFT A TRAIL BEHIND...

A TRAIL HE *FOLLOWED*.

I WAS LOOKING FOR THE BIG BAD
WOLF... AND NOW THERE HE WAS, HUFFING
AND PUFFING AT THE DOORS OF MY MIND.

AND *GOD HELP ME*, A SMALL, FUCKED-
UP PART OF ME WANTED TO LET HIM IN.

IT WAS INSANE. I HAD SPOKEN TO HIM
ONLY FOUR TIMES. THE FIRST TIME,
HE HELD ME AT GUNPOINT.

HE GAVE ME MONTHS
OF NIGHTMARES.

AND... HE WANTED
TO SEE ME *SMILE*.

AND THAT WAS IT. HE NEEDED ME. THIS
SCARRED, BROKEN MAN NEEDED *ME*...
AND I WANTED TO BE THERE FOR HIM.

I WANTED TO
SMILE FOR HIM...

I NEEDED TO...

...SNAP OUT OF IT AND
ASSUME **CONTROL** OVER THIS
RUNAWAY TRAIN OF A SITUATION.

UH. IT WAS
JUST THE **ONE TIME!**
I WAS...PASSING BY AND
I NOTICED YOUR
SCARS...

IS THAT **PITY** I HEAR IN
YOUR VOICE?

NO
NEED FOR THAT,
DOCTOR.

THEY ARE
BATTLE SCARS,
NOTHING MORE.

AND
ANYWAYS, I
BARELY FEEL
ANY PAIN.

MY PROFESSOR ONCE SAID A
PSYCHIATRIST IS AN
ARCHEOLOGIST OF THE MIND.

YOU GENTLY REMOVE LAYERS OF
DEFENSIVENESS, DENIAL, RESENTMENT,
AND SHAME. ONE QUESTION AT A TIME.

YOU DON'T PUSH THEM.

LIKE AN ARCHEOLOGIST, YOU GO
IN CAREFULLY WITH A SOFT BRUSH
AND A TENDER TOUCH.

BUT THAT DAY I FORGOT MY
BRUSH AND WENT STRAIGHT
FOR THE **HAMMER**.

I'M **NOT**
LETTING THIS
GO!
I NEED
TO KNOW ABOUT
YOUR **LOSS!**

WHY?

BECAUSE...
I WANT TO
HELP...

OH, **STOP**
IT, DOCTOR!

TELL ME, AND
HONESTLY!

WHY ARE YOU **HERE?**
SEE, I'LL GIVE YOU THIS:
YOU GOT ME TO TELL YOU MORE
ABOUT MYSELF THAN ANYONE
ELSE **EVER** DID. AND WHO
KNOWS, MAYBE IT'S
MY FAULT.

MAYBE I WAS
DWELLING TOO MUCH
ON WHY I WANTED TO SEE
YOU SMILE. MAYBE THAT'S
WHY I LET YOU IN...BUT IN
THE END, NONE OF IT
MATTERS.



SEE, I MAY BE
A LITTLE *CRAZY*, BUT
I'M NOT *STUPID*.

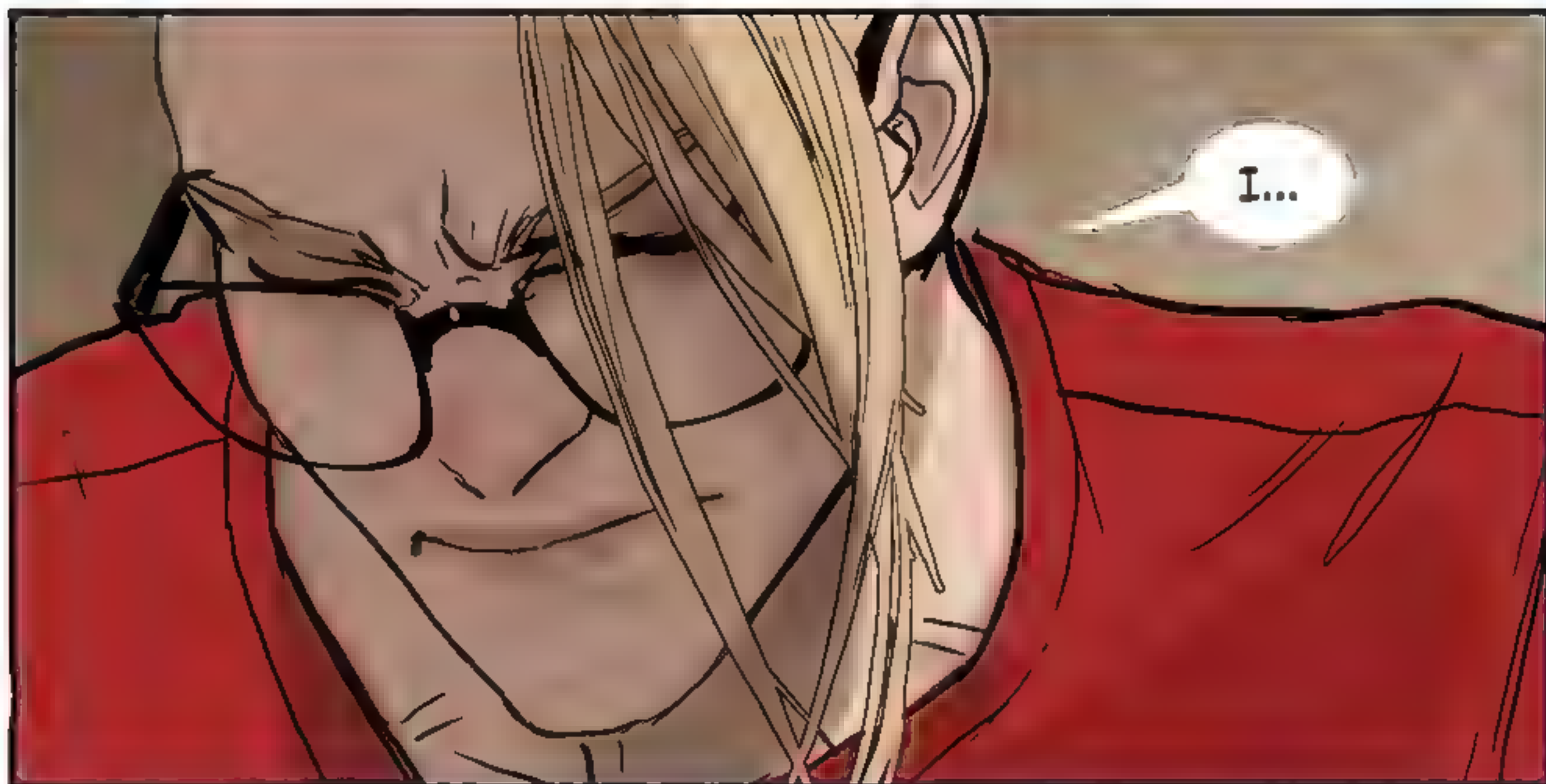
YOU MAY HIDE
IT BETTER THAN OTHERS,
BUT LIKE THEM YOU'RE HERE
HOPING TO WRITE A *BOOK*
OR AN *ARTICLE* OR A
THESIS...

IN THE END
AT LEAST THE COPS
ARE *HONEST*.

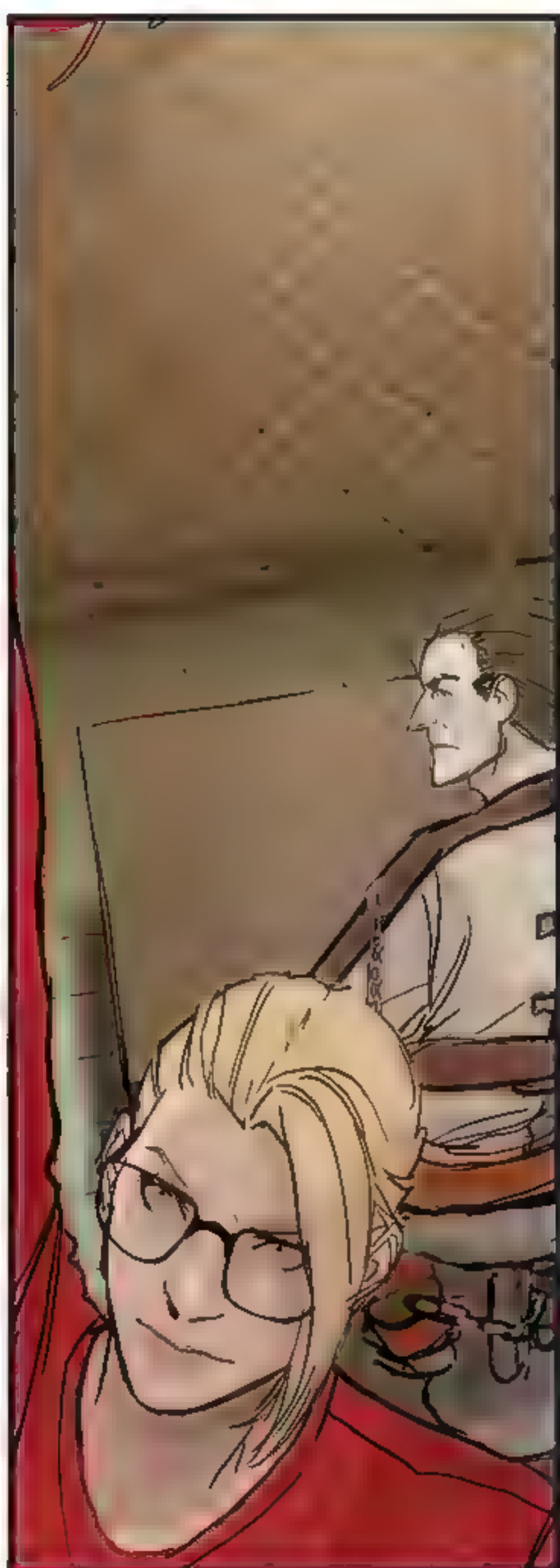
THEY SEE
US AS MONSTERS
BECAUSE WE ARE
JUST THAT!



NO!
IT'S
NOT... I'M
NOT LIKE
THAT!



I...



HE SAID IT IN OUR VERY
FIRST MEETING.

NORMAL PEOPLE DREAM
OF GOING CRAZY.

PROBLEM IS, SOMETIMES
THERE'S NO COMING BACK.



AND YOU KNOW WHAT? *THIS*
CERTAINLY QUALIFIED AS CRAZY.

IT WAS AN ADRENALINE-FUELED
MOVE OF DESPERATION.

AND IN THAT MOMENT I ALLOWED
THE THOUGHT I HAD BEEN RUNNING
AWAY FROM TO FINALLY TAKE SHAPE.

A TERRIFYING AND
DARKLY ALLURING IMAGE
THAT PLAGUED MY MIND.



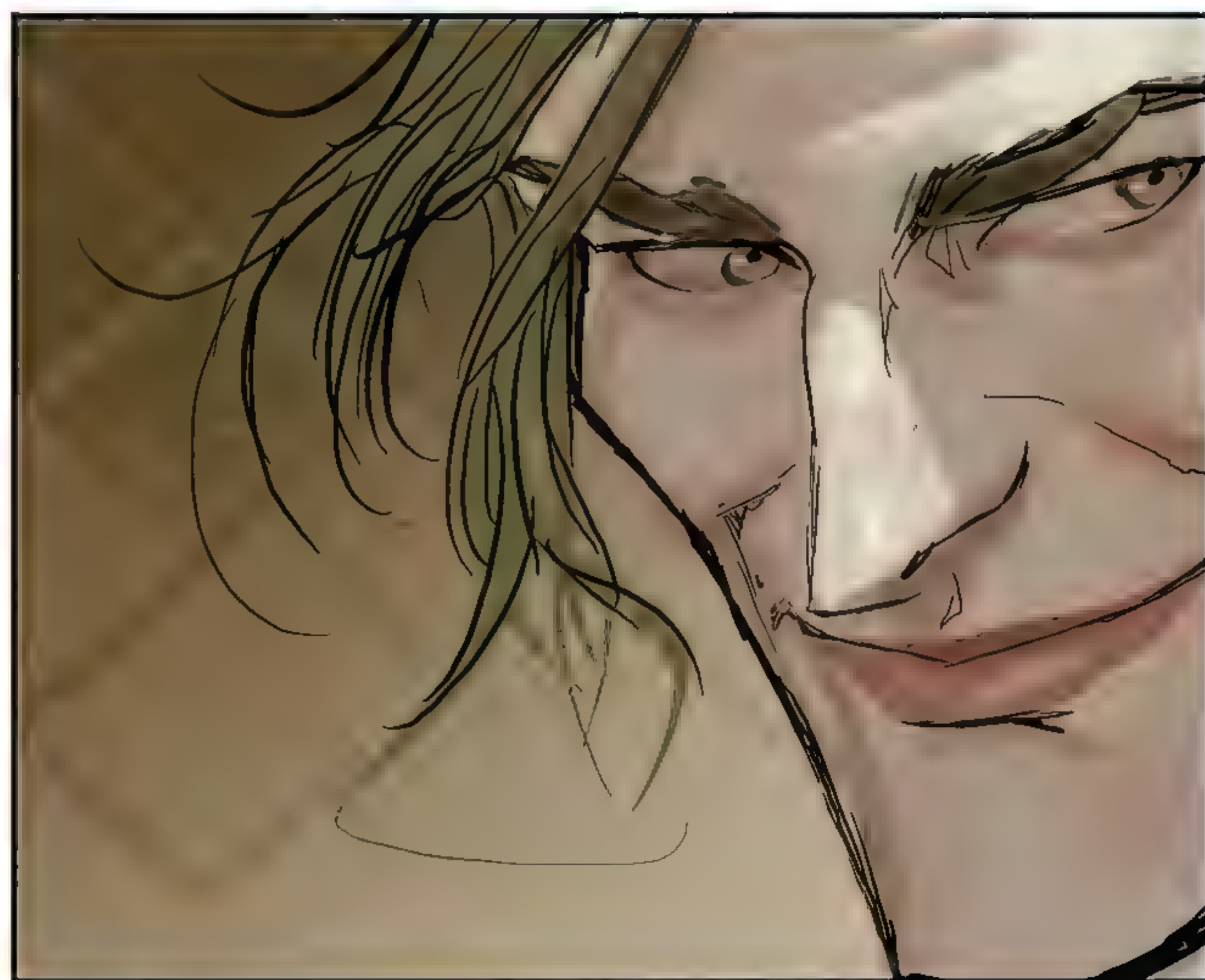
MAYBE THERE WAS ANOTHER REASON
THOSE OTHER PSYCHIATRISTS COULDN'T
GET A GENUINE EMOTION OUT OF HIM...

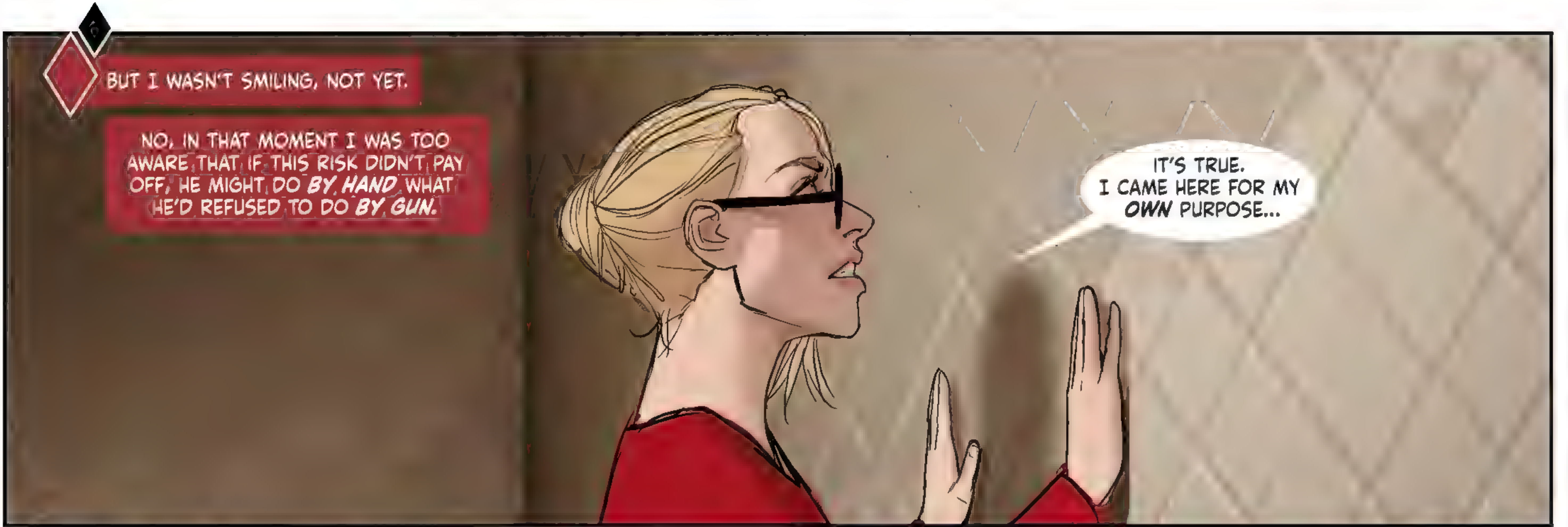


MAYBE THE ANSWER WAS
STARING ME IN THE FACE.

MAYBE, JUST MAYBE SOMEWHERE
IN MY REPRESSED HEART I KNEW
IT AND FEARED IT BECAUSE...

BECAUSE, GOD HELP ME,
I MIGHT SMILE BACK AT HIM...

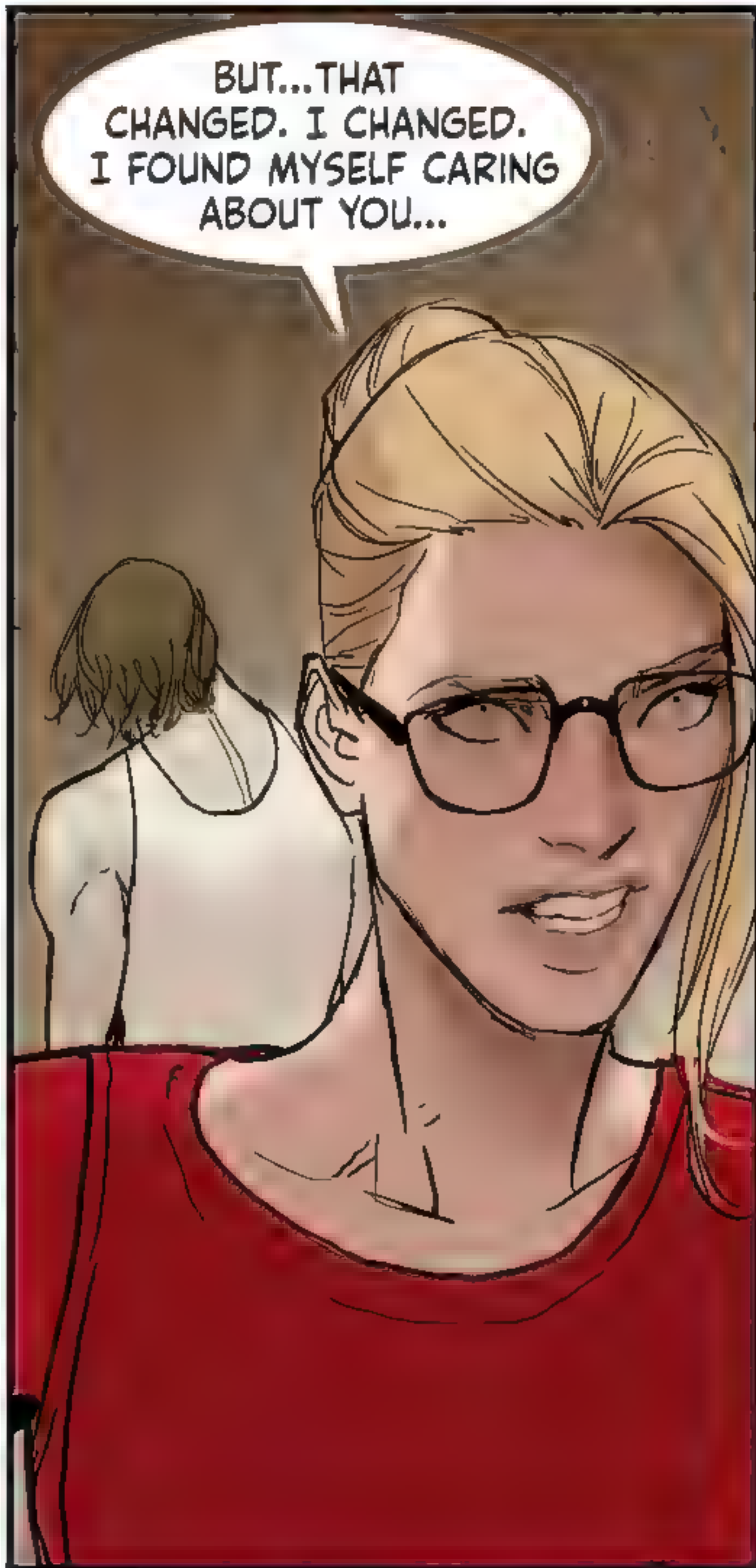




BUT I WASN'T SMILING, NOT YET.

NO, IN THAT MOMENT I WAS TOO AWARE THAT IF THIS RISK DIDN'T PAY OFF, HE MIGHT DO *BY HAND* WHAT HE'D REFUSED TO DO *BY GUN*.

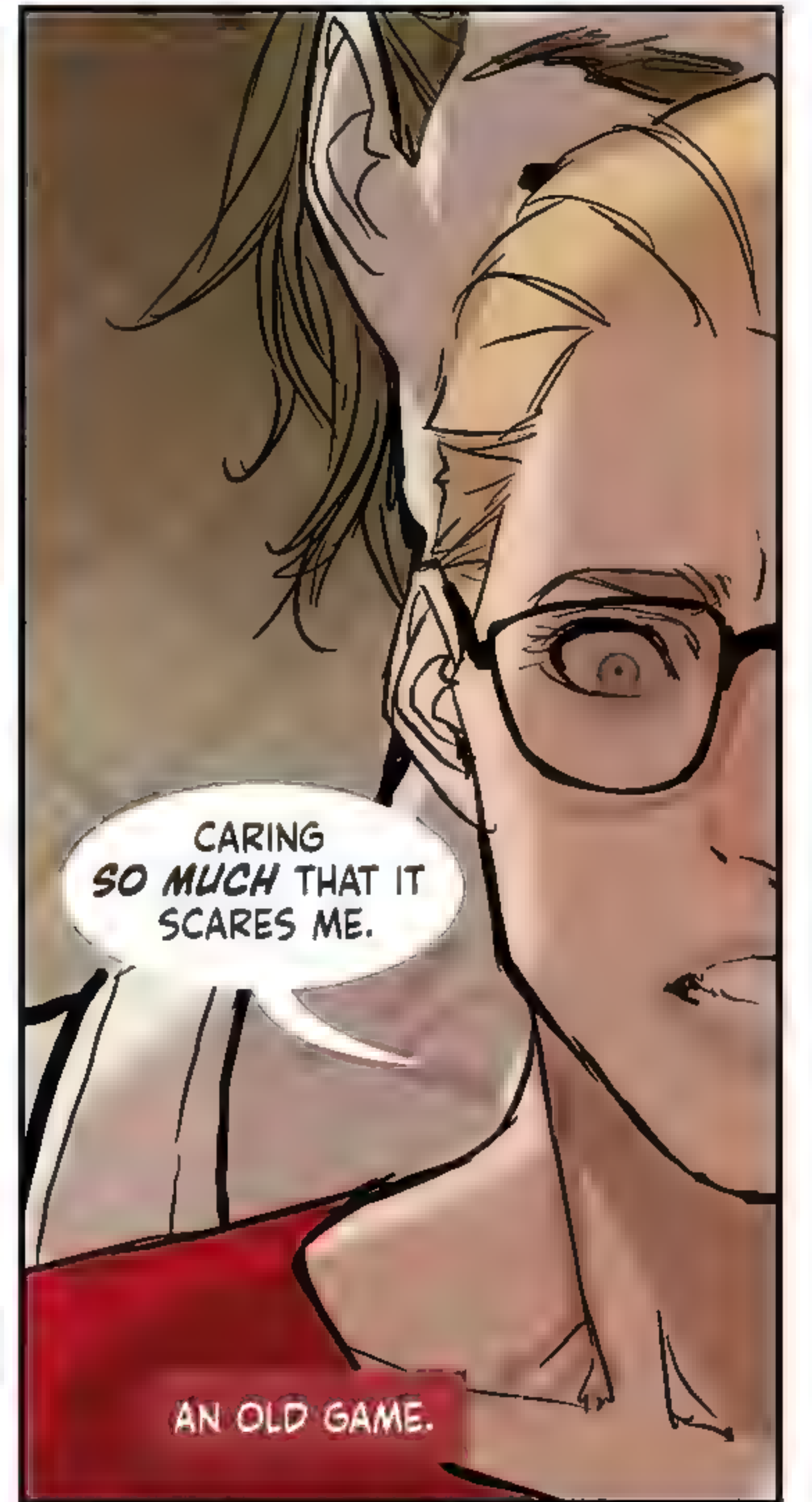
IT'S TRUE. I CAME HERE FOR MY OWN PURPOSE...



BUT...THAT CHANGED. I CHANGED. I FOUND MYSELF CARING ABOUT YOU...



THEN AND THERE, I PLAYED A GAME FOR KEEPS.



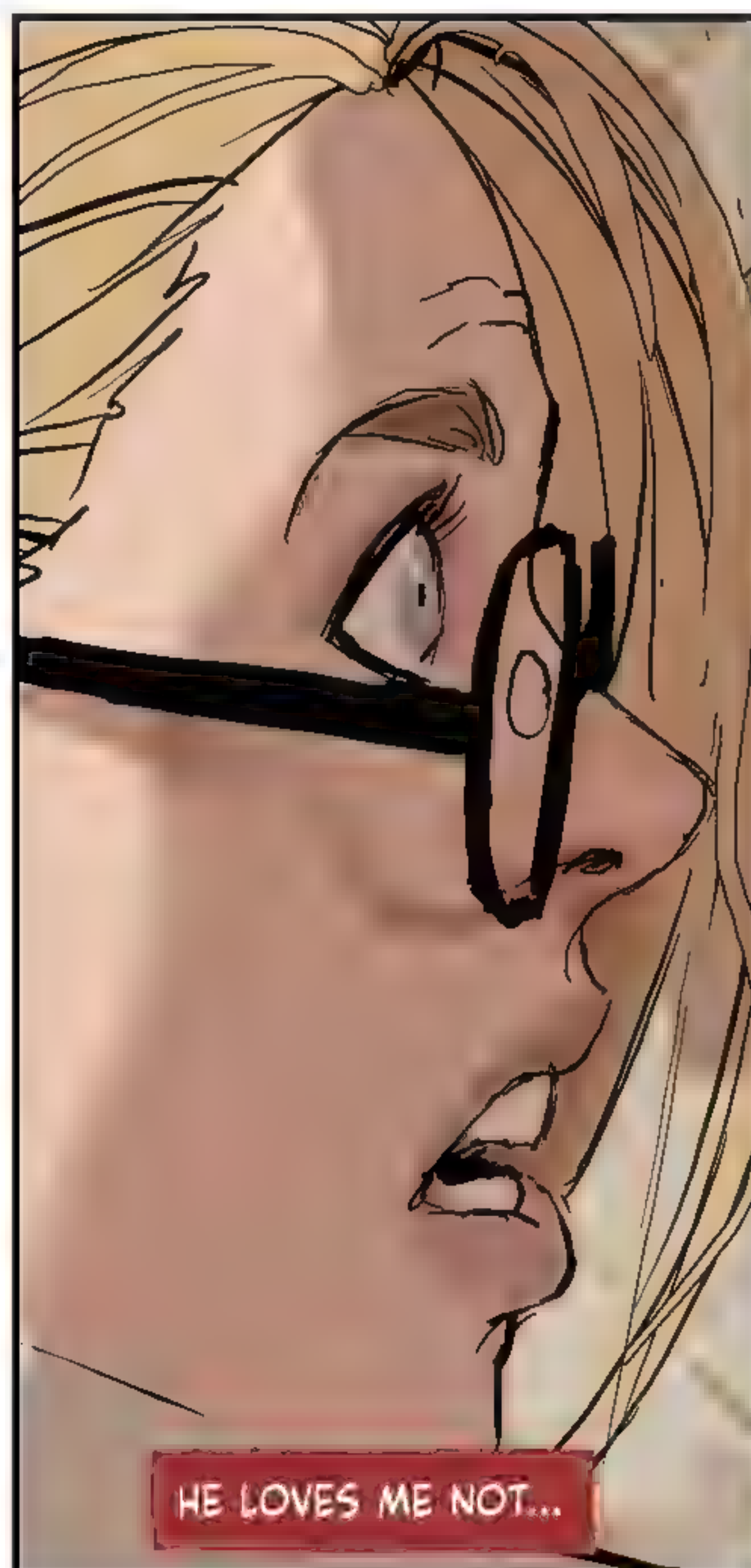
CARING SO MUCH THAT IT SCARES ME.

AN OLD GAME.

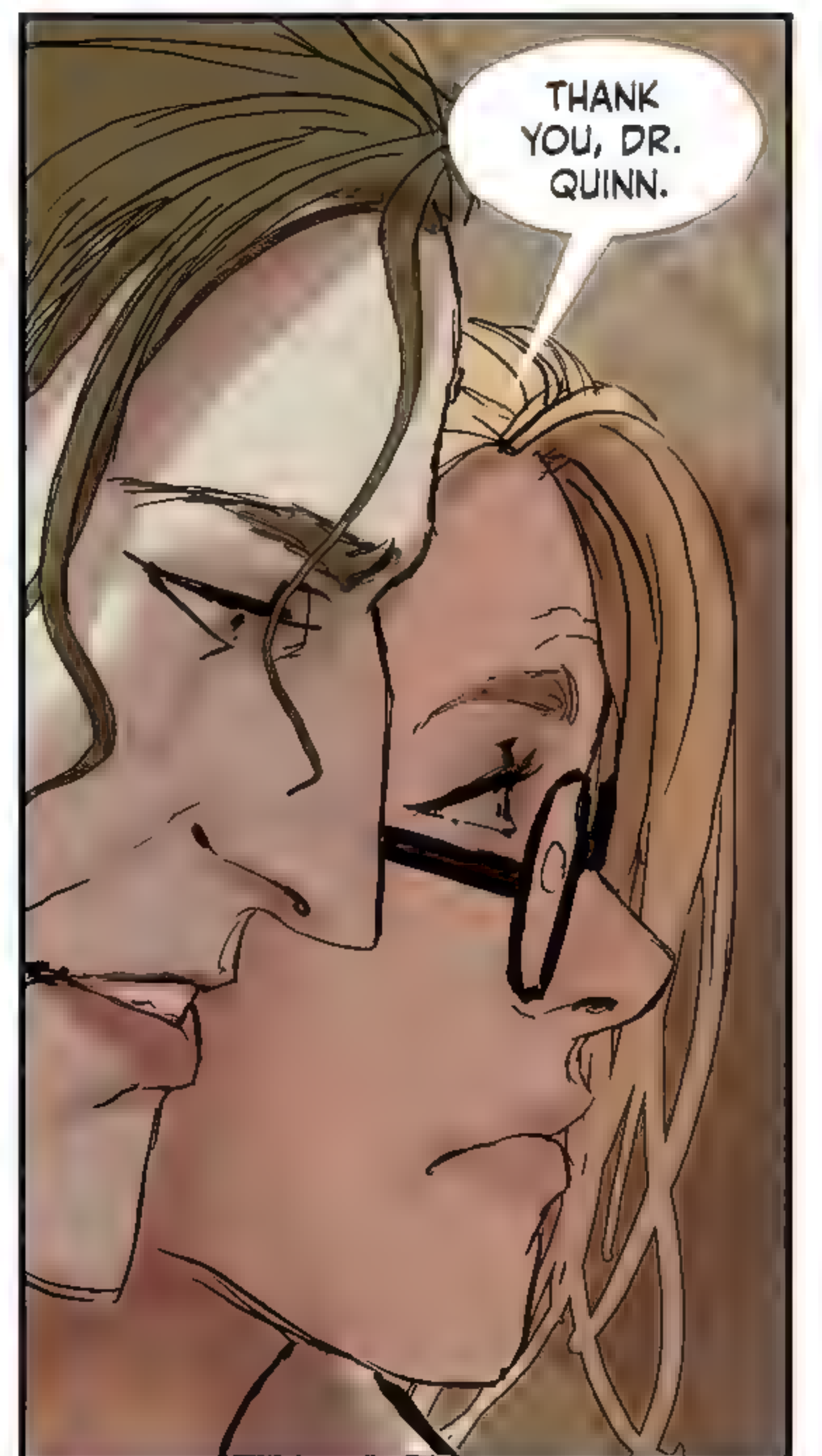


YOU... SCARE ME. AND YET...

YOU KNOW THE ONE... HE LOVES ME...



HE LOVES ME NOT...



THANK YOU, DR. QUINN.



THANK YOU
FOR CARING.

HARLEY...

YOU
CAN CALL ME
HARLEY...

HARLEY...QUINN.

HEH...

I LIKE THAT...

I HAD A DREAM THAT NIGHT.

I DREAMED OF A LONG,
WINDING ROAD, OF BATS,
AND OF A GIANT BEAST.

I DREAMED OF A BROKEN MAN...

AND IN THE DREAM, I SMILED.





BOOK THREE

FIVE DAYS
AFTER...THE HUG.

HOW THE *HELL* DID
I GET *HERE*??!

I MEAN, IT WAS THREE IN THE
MORNING, AND THERE I WAS
WIDE AWAKE ON MY BED,
MENTALLY BACKTRACKING MY
WAY THROUGH LIFE...

...CONNECTING THE DOTS
THAT MIGHT EXPLAIN THE
DREAM I'D JUST HAD.

THEY SAY A LAWYER WHO DEFENDS
THEMSELF HAS *A FOOL* FOR A CLIENT.
I WONDER IF THE SAME IS TRUE FOR
PSYCHIATRISTS?

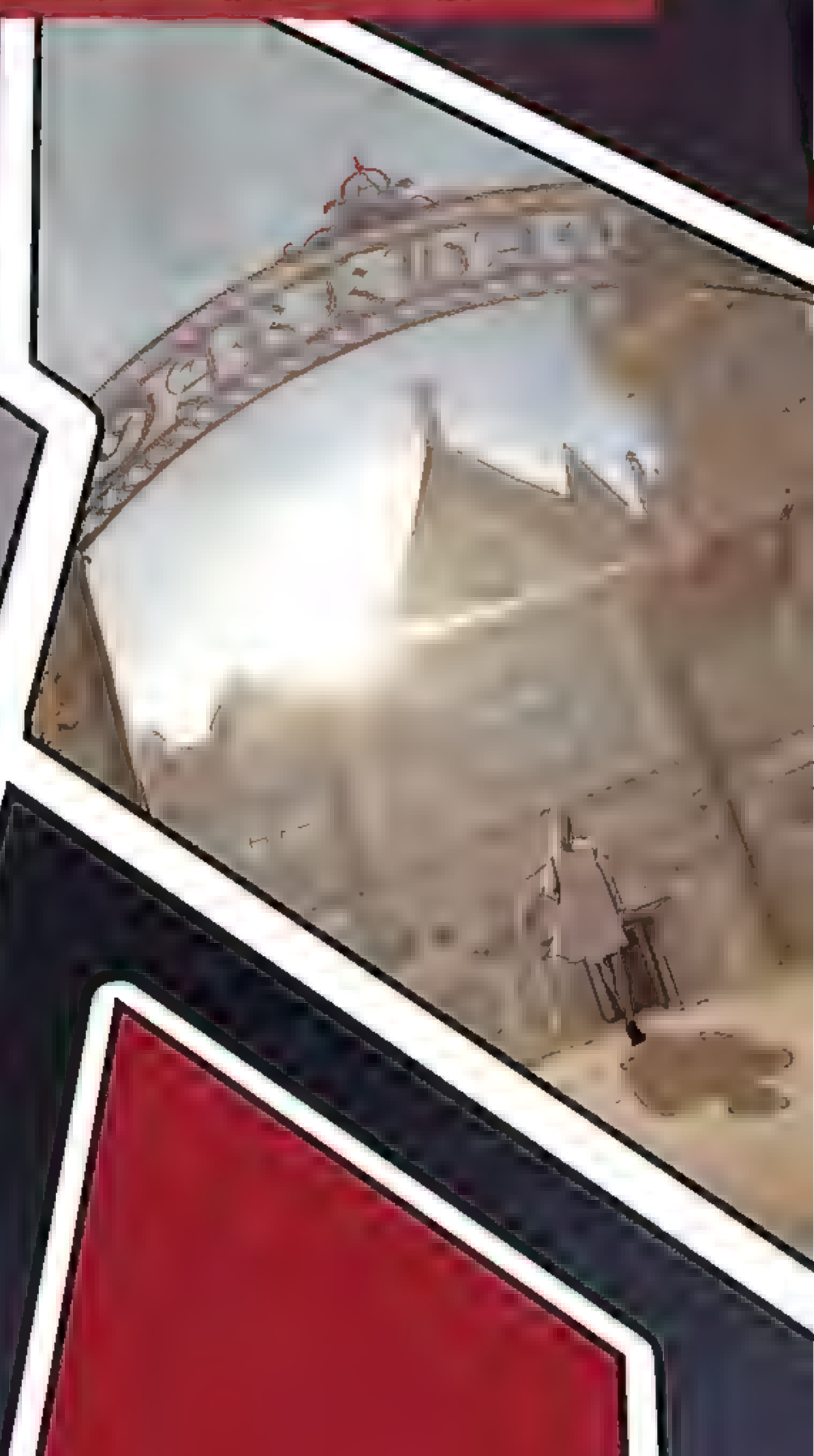
ANYHOW...PATIENT'S NAME:
HARLEEN QUINZEL.

PATIENT'S BAD COLLEGE
EXPERIENCE LED TO YEARS
OF EMOTIONAL ISOLATION.

EVEN WHEN SHE WAS SURROUNDED
BY PEOPLE, SHE WAS ALONE--SHYING
AWAY FROM RELATIONSHIPS BECAUSE
SHE FELT THERE WERE ALWAYS PEOPLE
WATCHING, WAITING, EAGER TO
MAKE HER THE BUTT OF THEIR JOKES.

THIS LED TO A LOT OF
UNRESOLVED RESENTMENT
AND ANGER.

PATIENT LATER CHANGED HER WORK
ENVIRONMENT, BUT THAT HAD LITTLE
EFFECT ON HER SOCIAL INTERACTIONS.
THE ONLY PERSON SHE TALKED TO WAS
A GRUFF SECURITY CHIEF WHO RARELY
EVEN CRACKED A SMILE.





IT MADE A SAD KIND OF SENSE
THAT IN THE END, I GRAVITATED TO
THE ONE PERSON WHO ACTUALLY
SEEMED TO *NEED* ME...

...THE ONE PERSON WHO
MAYBE EVEN LIKED ME...

THE PERSON WHO TWICE
HELD MY *LIFE* IN HIS HANDS.

THE FIRST TIME HE GAVE
ME NIGHTMARES...

THE SECOND
TIME...

WELL, THE SECOND TIME HE
GAVE ME SOME VERY DIFFERENT
KINDS OF DREAMS...

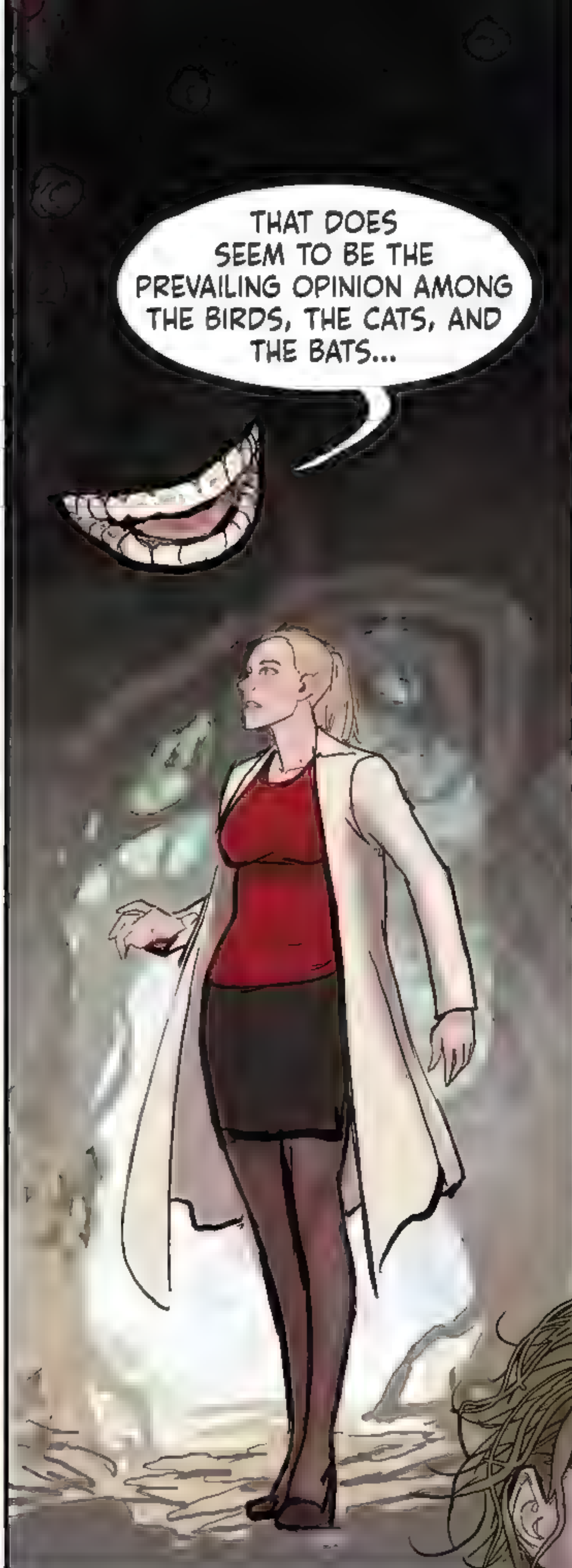




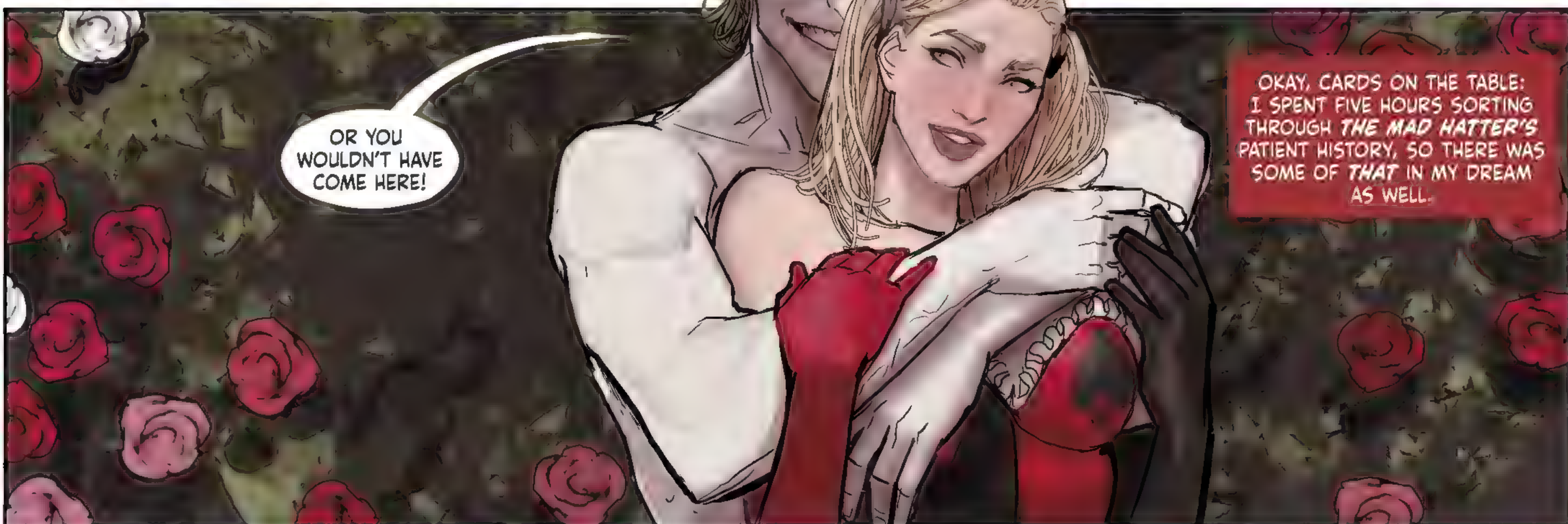
OH YES...*VERY*
DIFFERENT.

DOCTOR,
DOCTOR, DOCTOR...

STILL IN
YOUR *LAB COAT*.
UNIFORMS...THEY DO
BRING A CERTAIN SENSE
OF *CONTROL* WITH
THEM, DON'T
THEY?

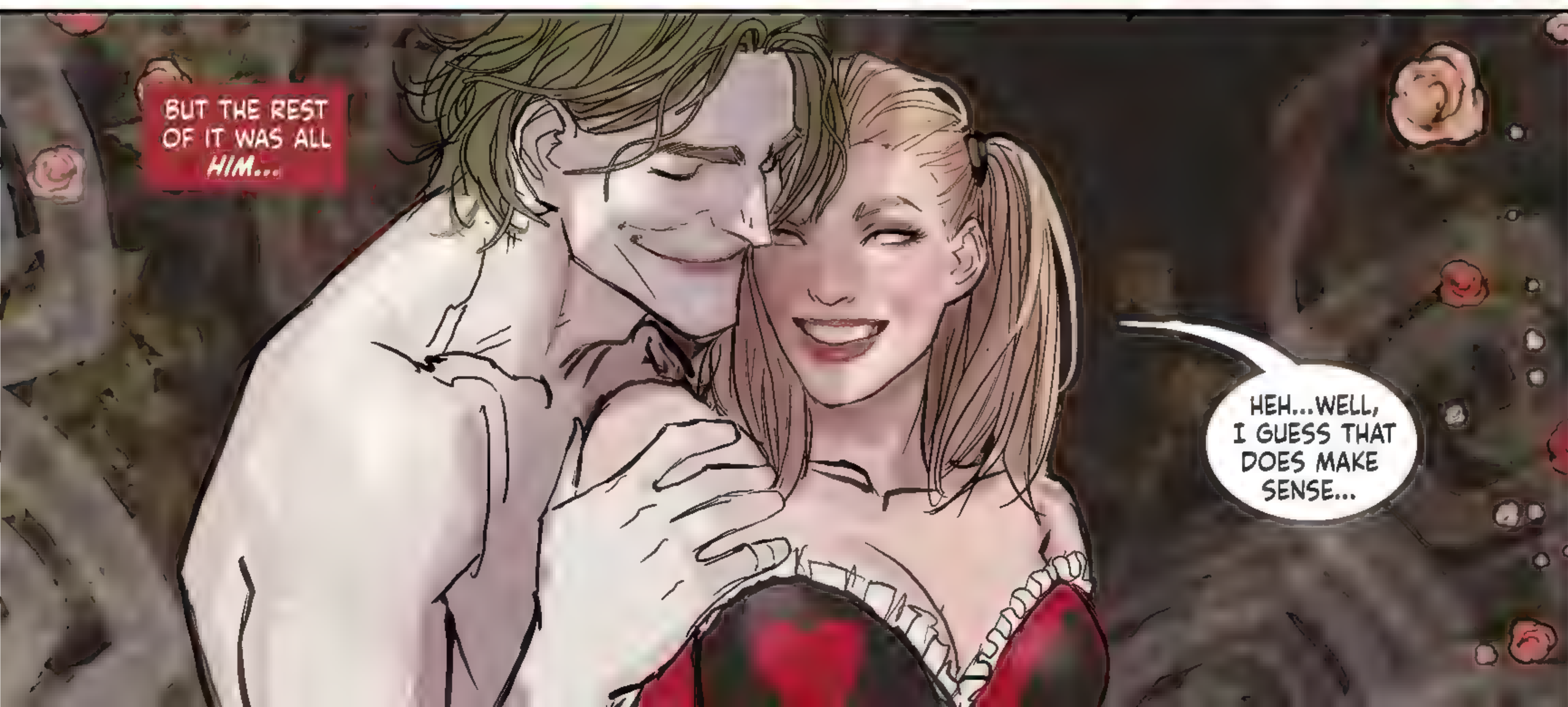


THAT DOES
SEEM TO BE THE
PREVAILING OPINION AMONG
THE BIRDS, THE CATS, AND
THE BATS...



OR YOU
WOULDN'T HAVE
COME HERE!

OKAY, CARDS ON THE TABLE:
I SPENT FIVE HOURS SORTING
THROUGH *THE MAD HATTER'S*
PATIENT HISTORY, SO THERE WAS
SOME OF *THAT* IN MY DREAM
AS WELL.

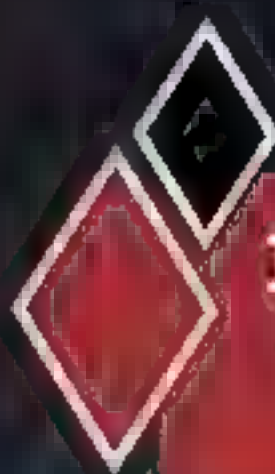
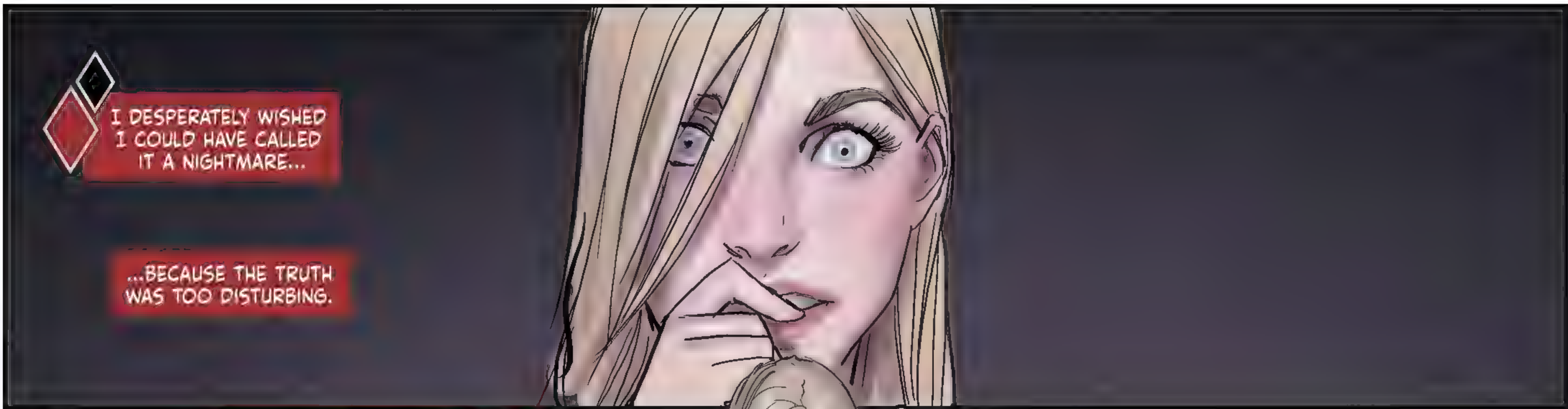


BUT THE REST
OF IT WAS ALL
HIM...

HEH...WELL,
I GUESS THAT
DOES MAKE
SENSE...



...MR. JAY.



I DESPERATELY WISHED
I COULD HAVE CALLED
IT A NIGHTMARE...

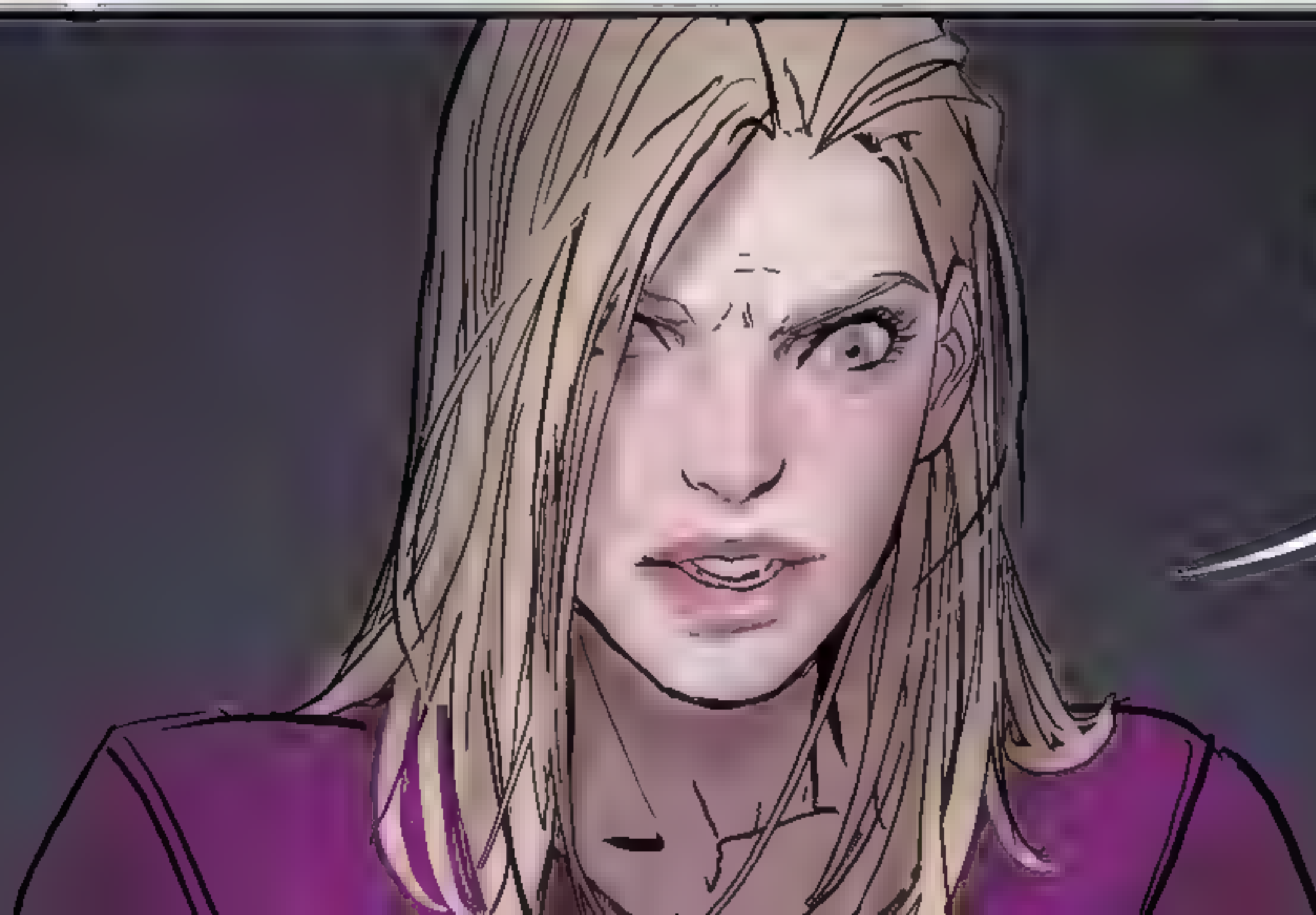
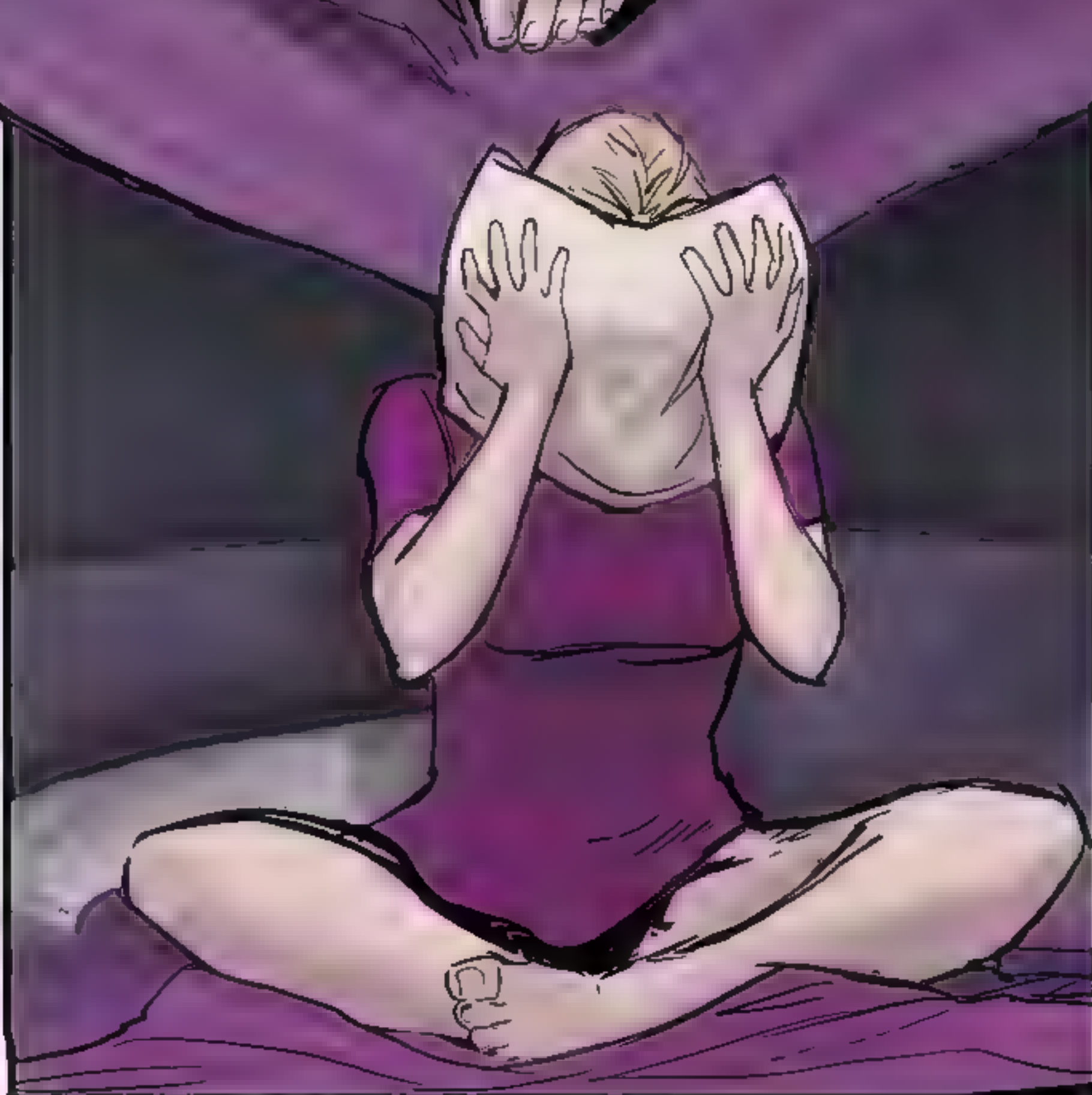
...BECAUSE THE TRUTH
WAS TOO DISTURBING.



HE GOT UNDER
MY SKIN.

I DIDN'T JUST SNAP
OUT OF THAT DREAM
FEELING SWEATY.

I WOKE UP
WET...



WHAT IS
WRONG WITH
ME?!



WHAT IS
WRONG WITH
YOU?!



COVERING THE
CAMERA WHILE ALONE
IN A ROOM WITH
THE JOKER?

I **HAD** TO.
HE FELT WATCHED.
IT'S...HE WAS BACKING OUT
AFTER I'D GOTTEN HIM TO
OPEN UP TO ME.



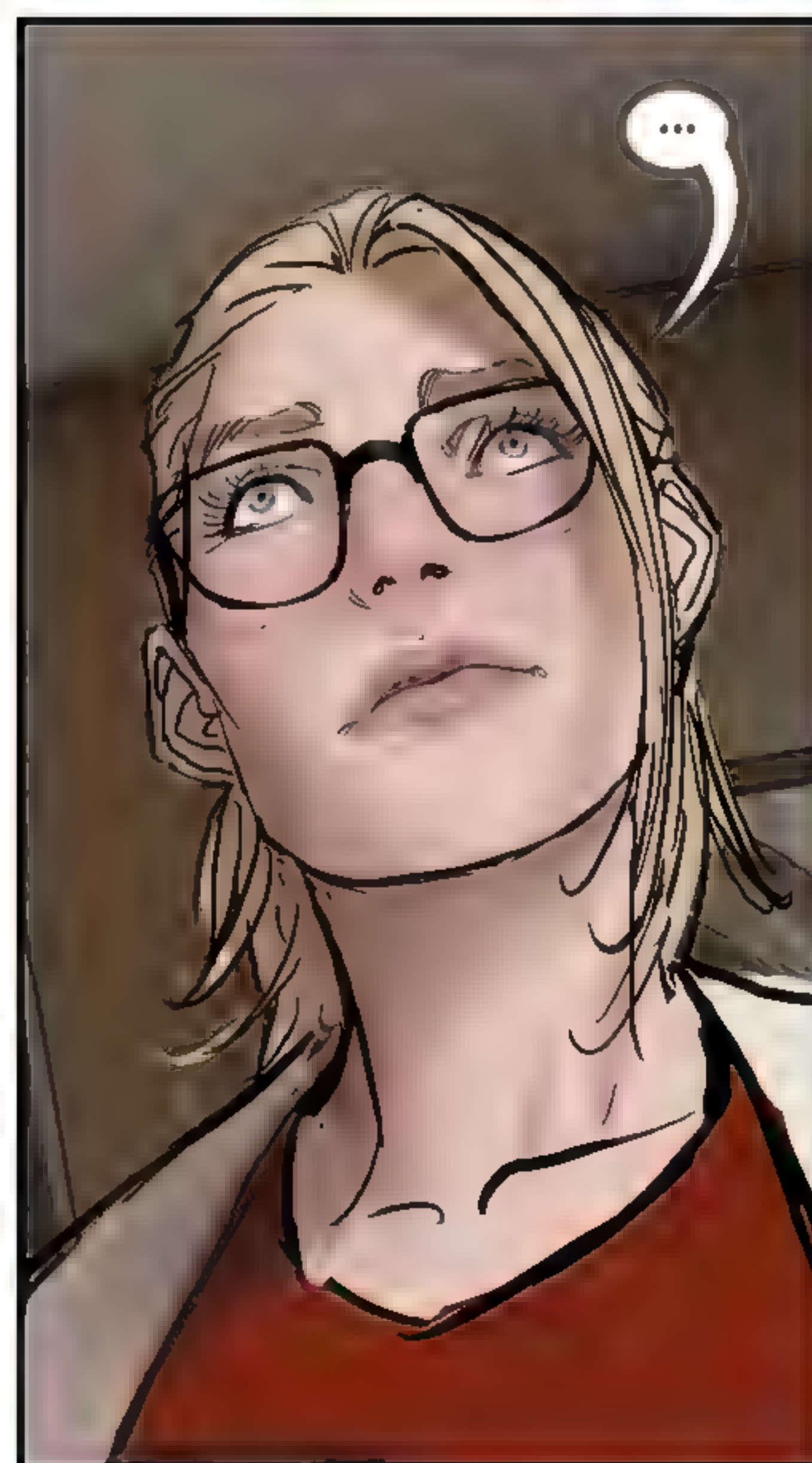
OH FOR
CRYING OUT LOUD,
DR. QUINZEL, JOKER HAS SO
FAR "OPENED UP" TO SIX DIFFERENT
PSYCHIATRISTS--AND BY **OPENED** I
MEAN OPENED THE SEWAGE
DRAIN AND SPILLED HIS
BULLSHIT!



NO! I SAW
THOSE PREVIOUS
INTERVIEWS. THIS IS
DIFFERENT!



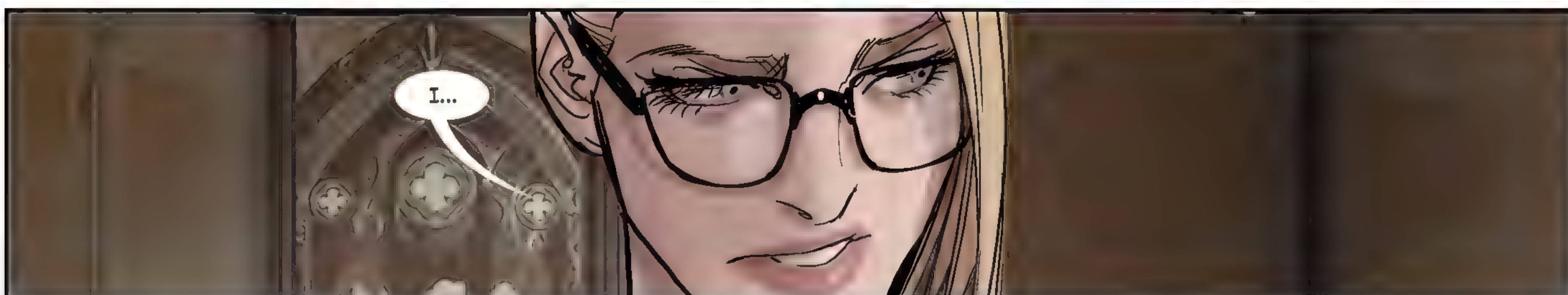
WHAT MAKES
YOU THINK **YOU'RE** SO SPECIAL
THAT HE WOULD OPEN UP TO YOU WHEN
FAR MORE **SEASONED** PSYCHIATRISTS
HAVE **FAILED** OVER AND OVER
AGAIN?



...



WELL?



I...



DR. QUINZEL,
YOU ARE A PROMISING
PSYCHIATRIST. I UNDERSTAND YOUR
EAGERNESS, BUT I MUST INSIST
THAT YOU **EXERCISE EXTREME**
CAUTION WITH THESE...
PEOPLE.

DR. STRANGE,
HE IS **COMPLETELY**
RESTRAINED. PLEASE. LET
ME CONTINUE THIS.
CAMERAS **STAY**
OFF.



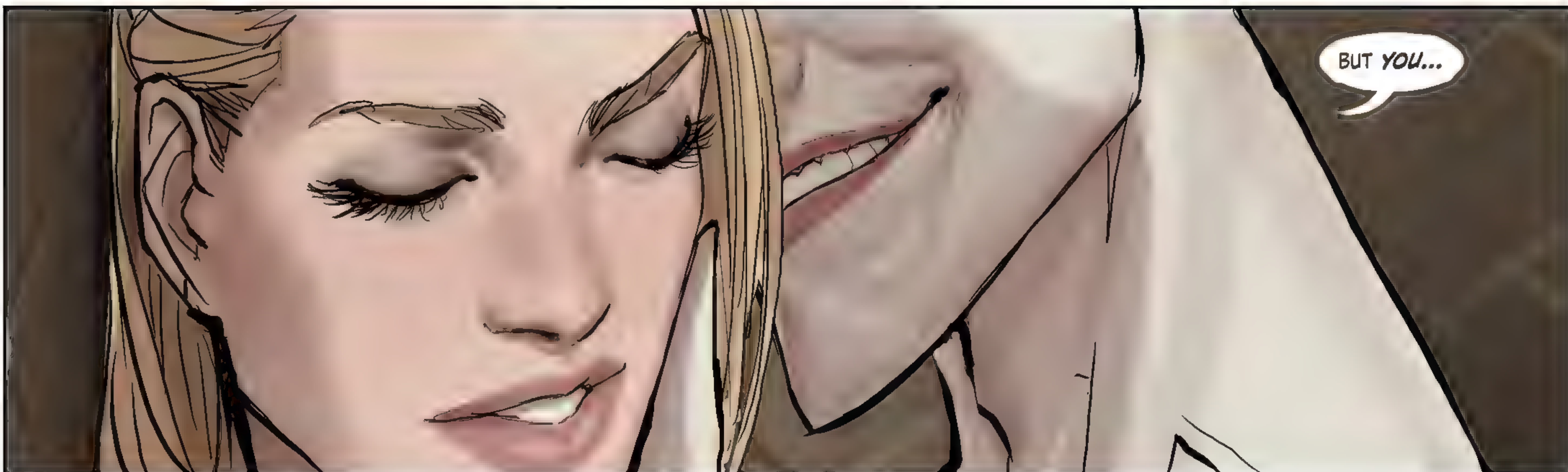
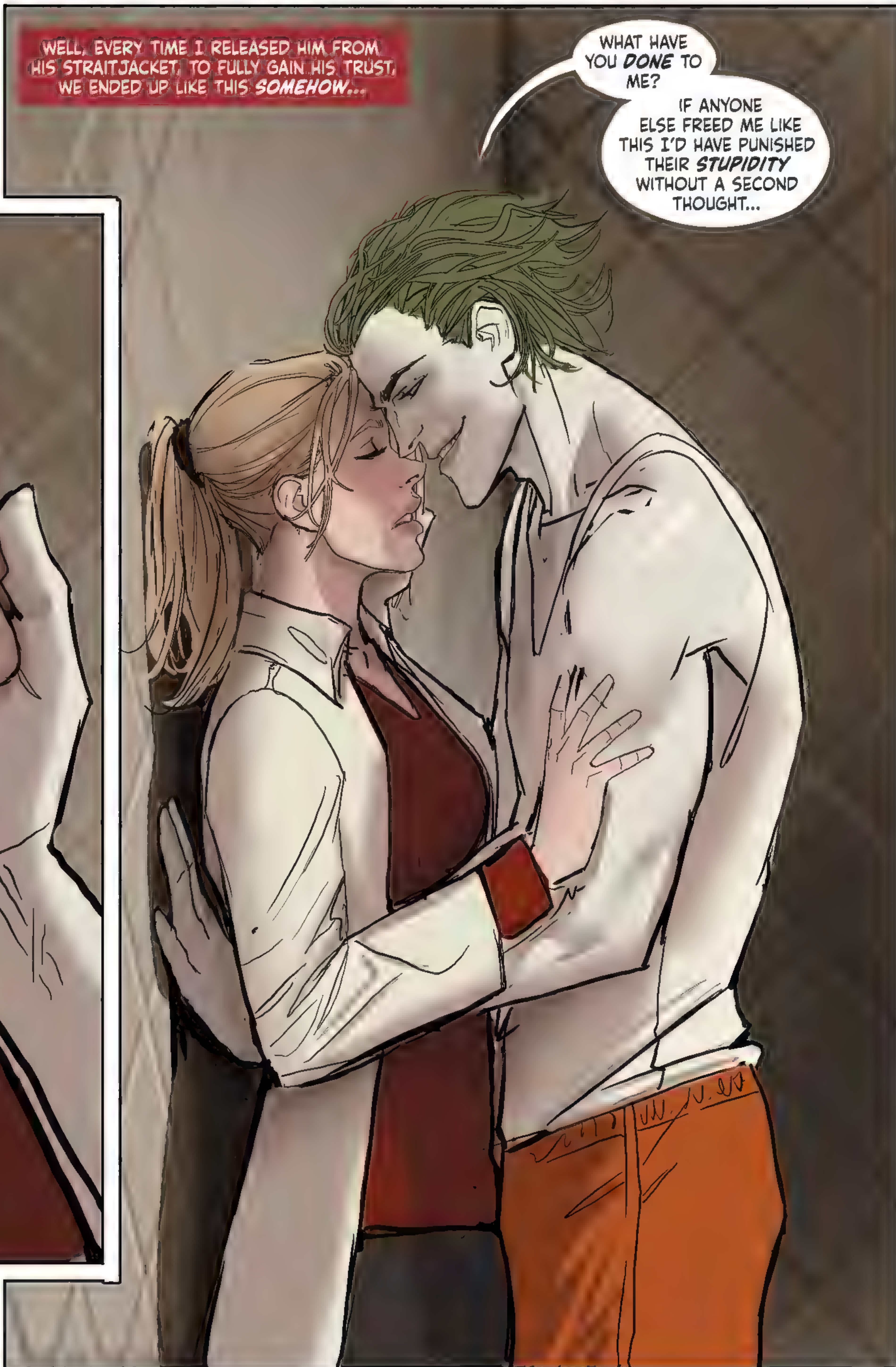
SIGH
FINE. TELL
JENNIFER TO HAVE YOU
SIGN A **WAIVER**. I'M NOT
HAVING YOU SUE ARKHAM
ASYLUM JUST BECAUSE
YOU LIKE LIVING
DANGEROUSLY.

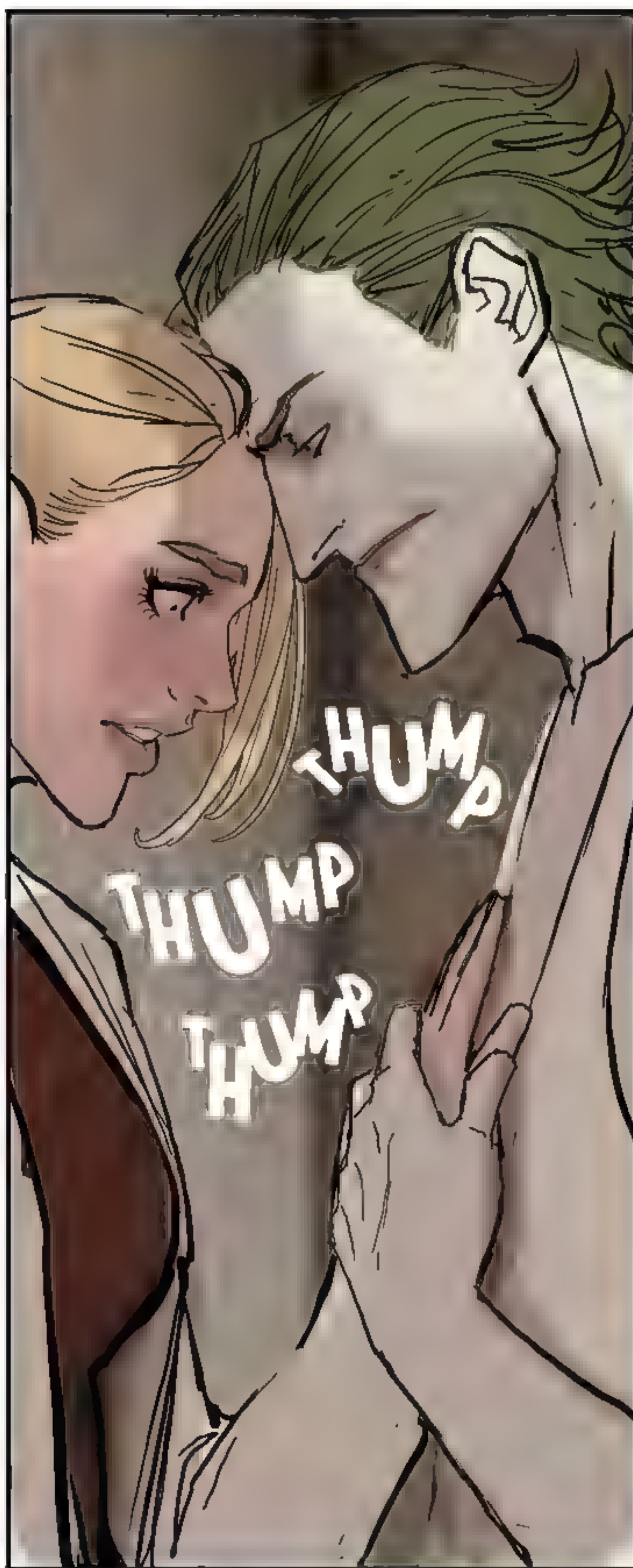


I DON'T LIKE LIVING
DANGEROUSLY!

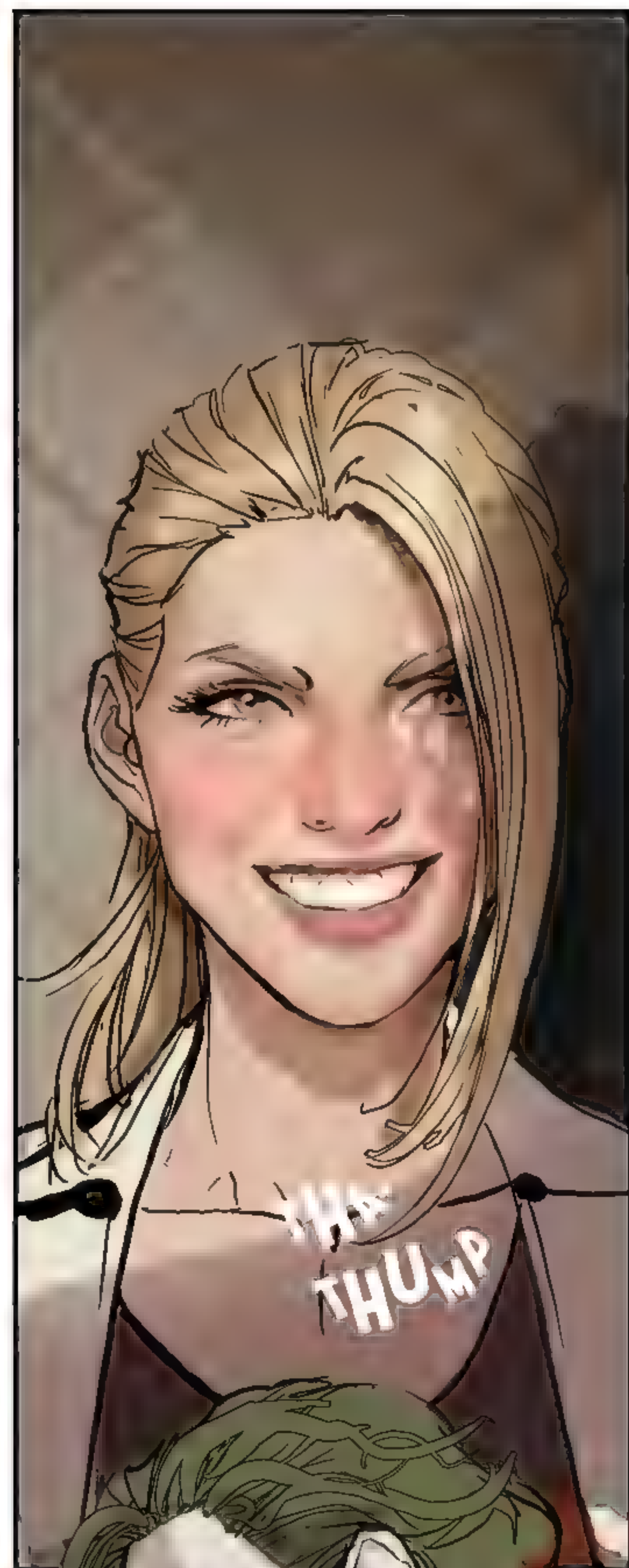


AND I HONESTLY
MEANT THAT.





NOBODY'S
DONE THAT FOR ME...
NOT FOR A *LONG*,
LONG TIME,
HARLEY.

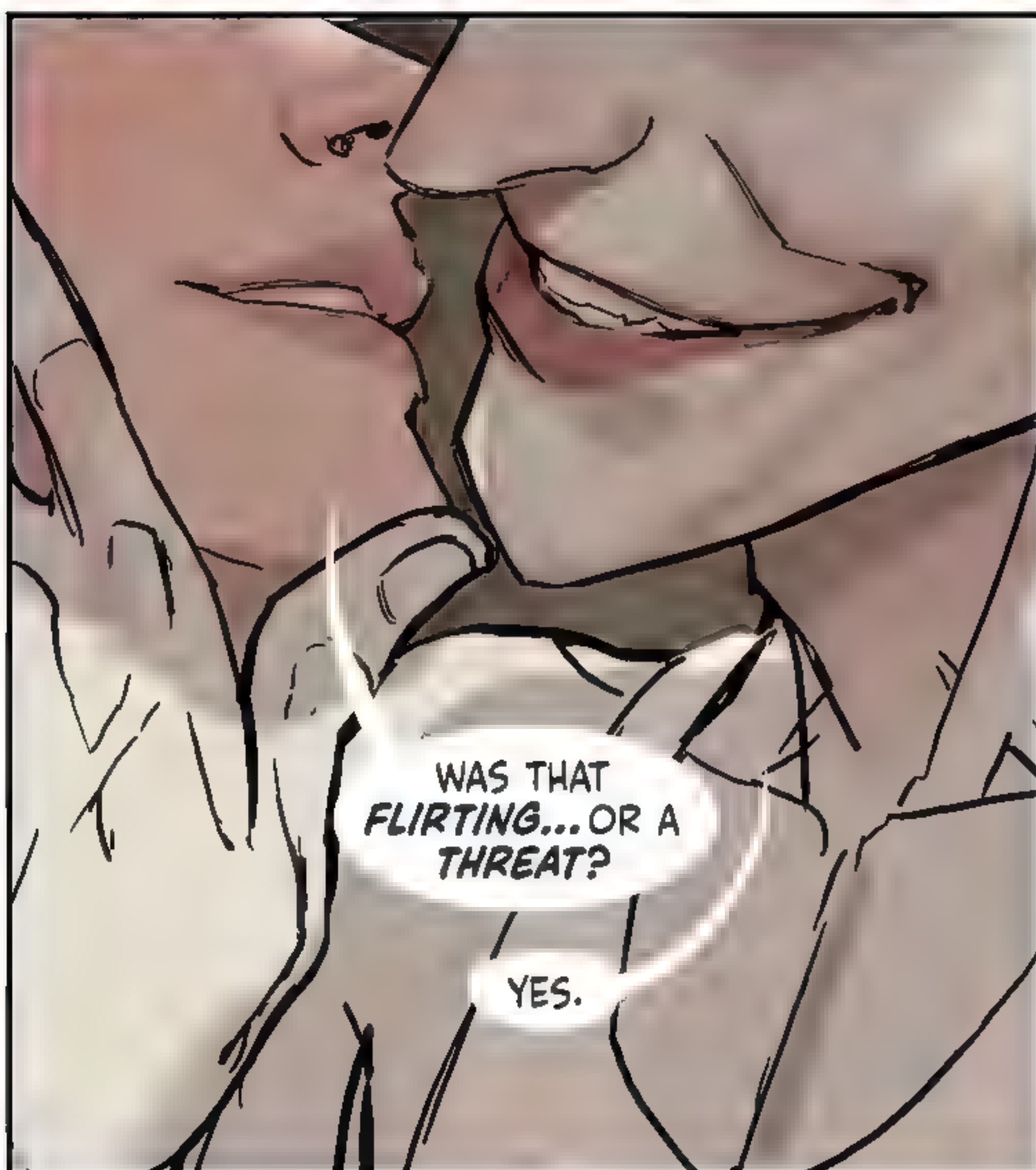


HAH! I KNEW
THAT *SMILE* WOULD
BE *AMAZING*! I'M SO
GLAD I DIDN'T PULL
THE TRIGGER THAT
NIGHT!



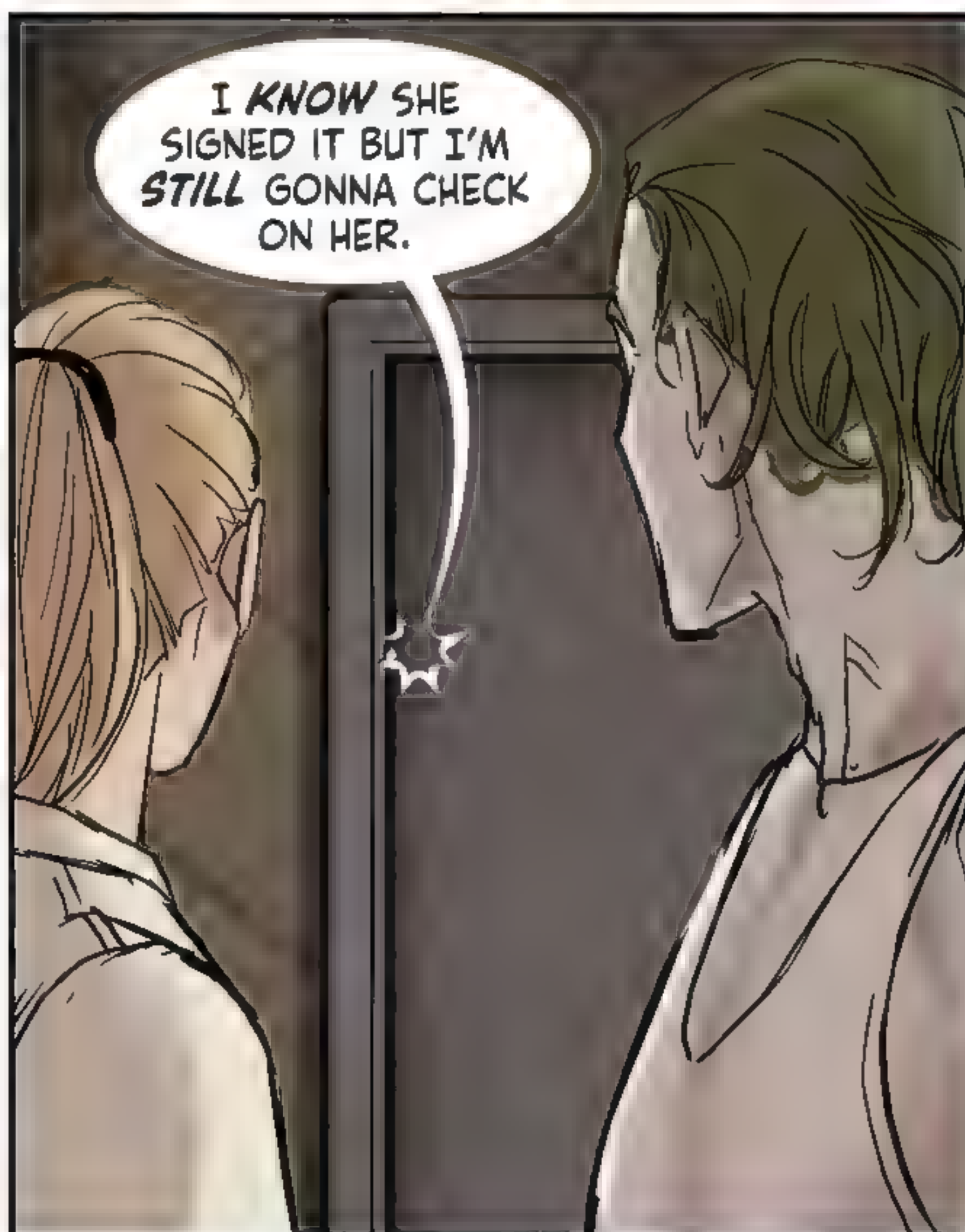
OH? I
THOUGHT YOU
WERE OUT OF
BULLETS?

FOR YOU?
NEVER!

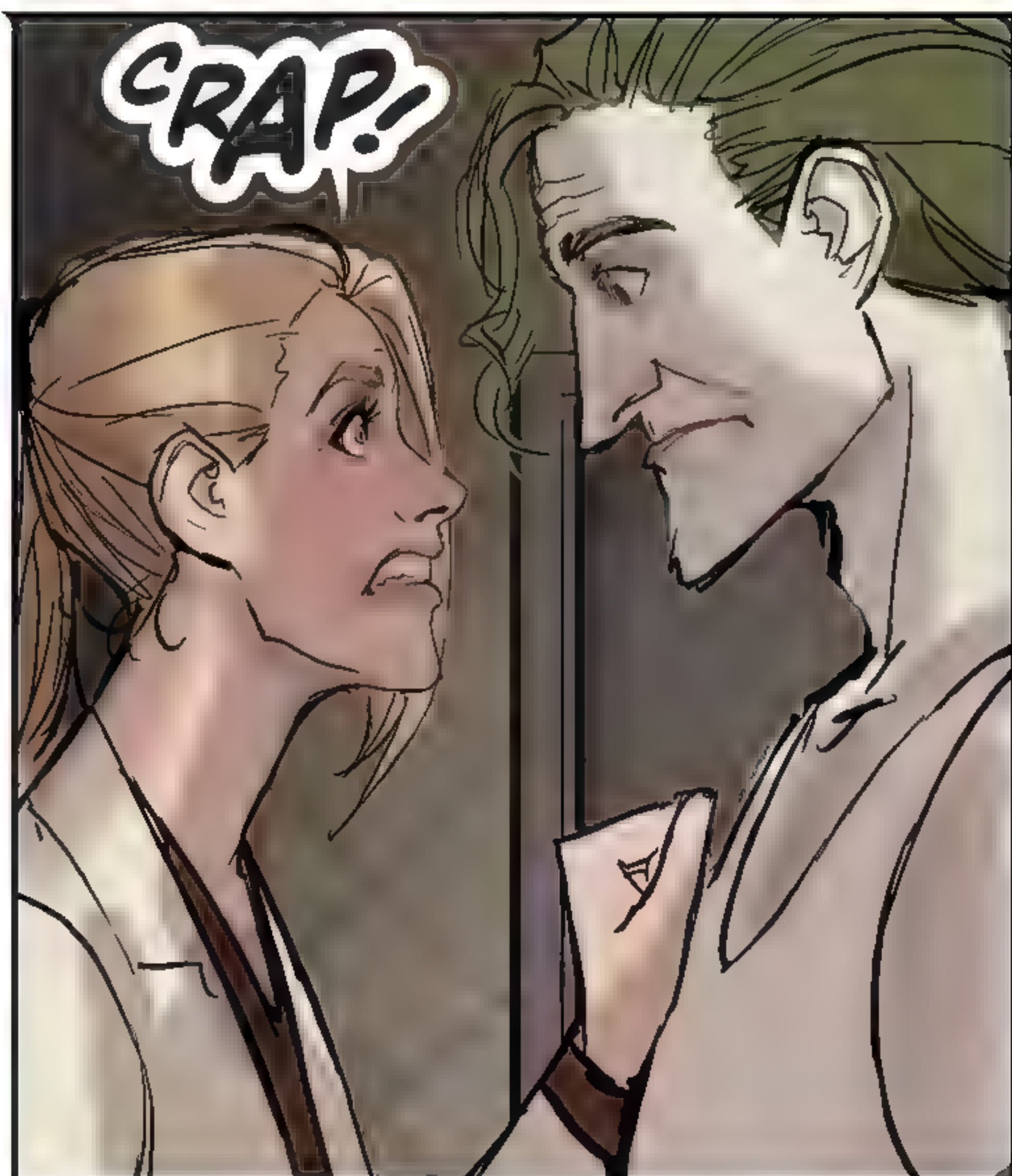


WAS THAT
FLIRTING... OR A
THREAT?

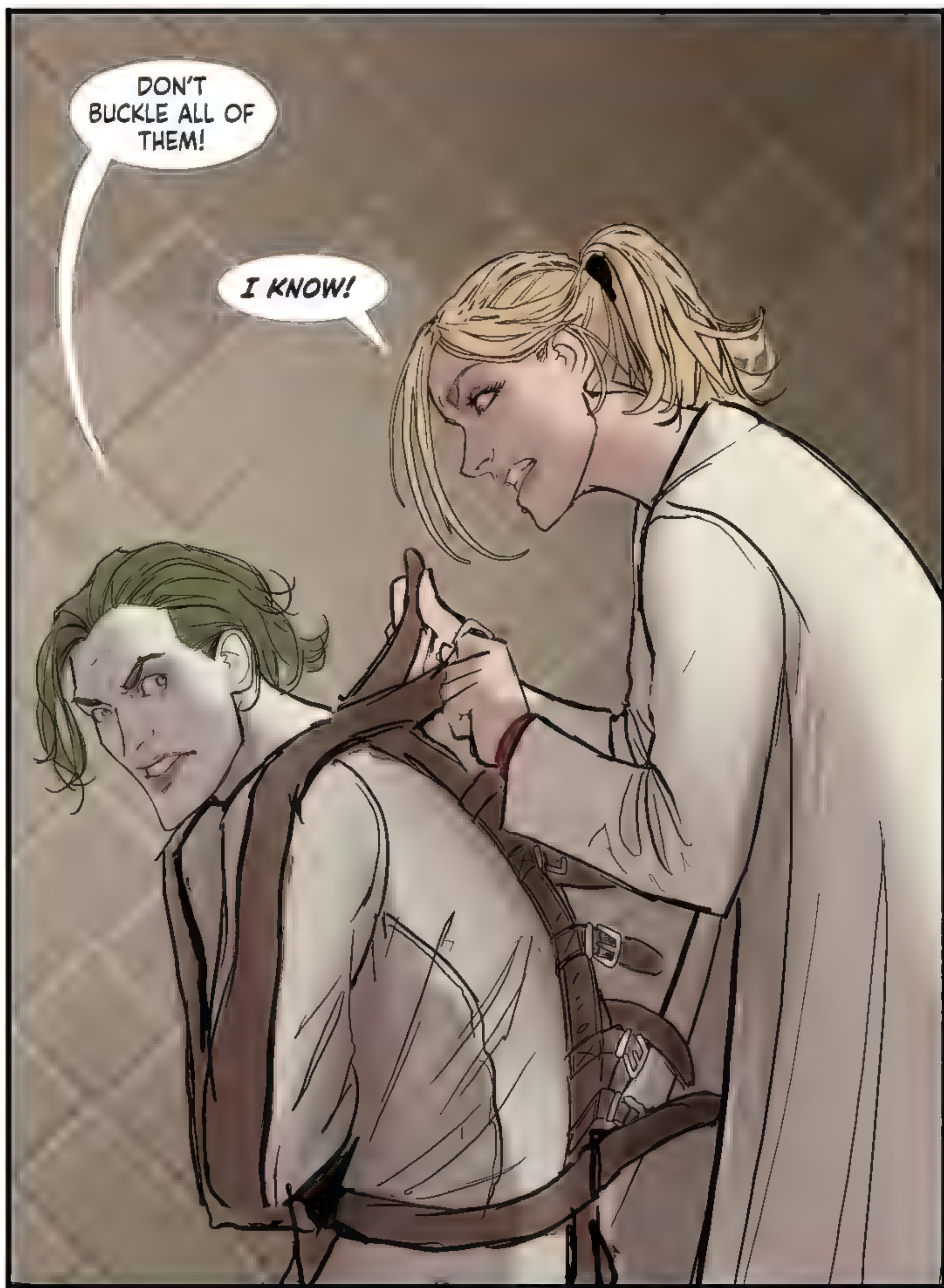
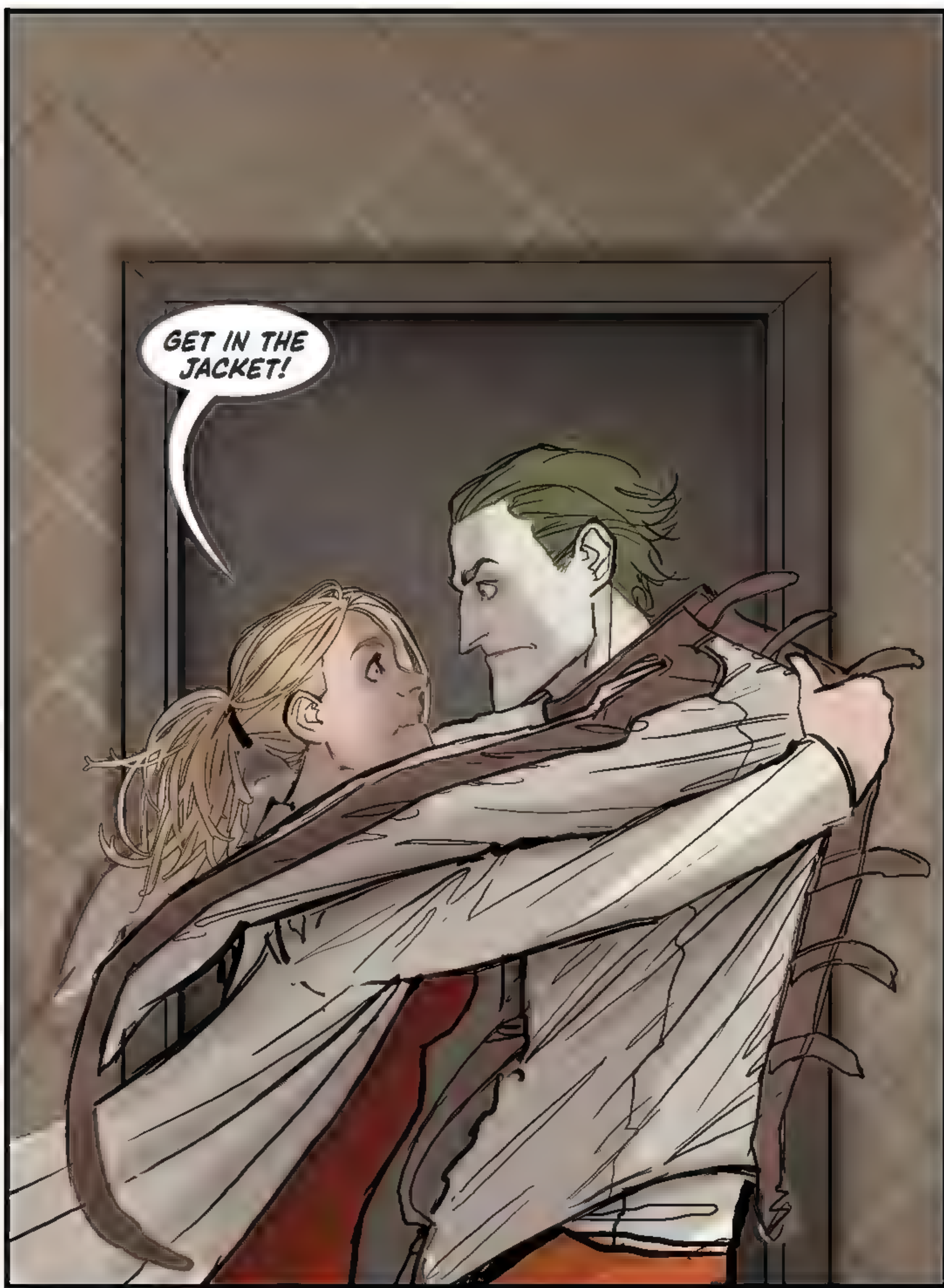
YES.

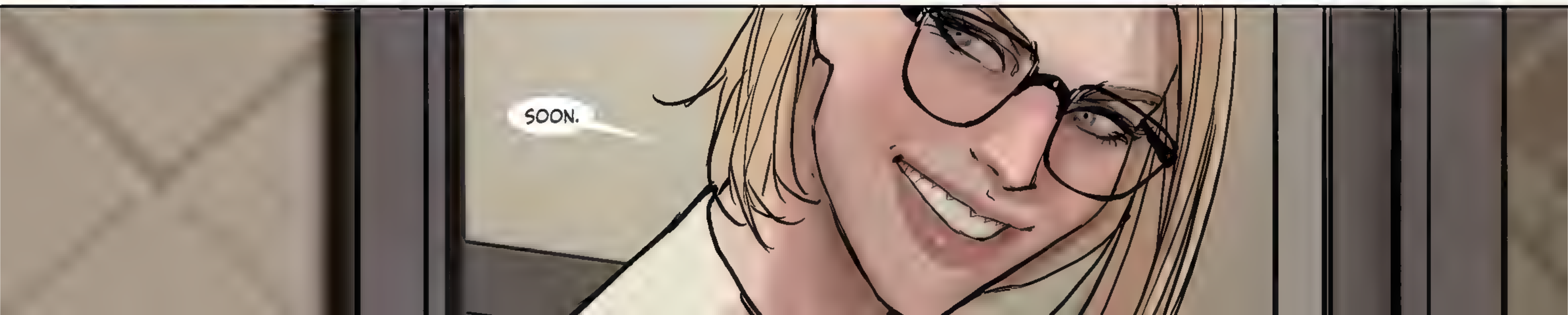
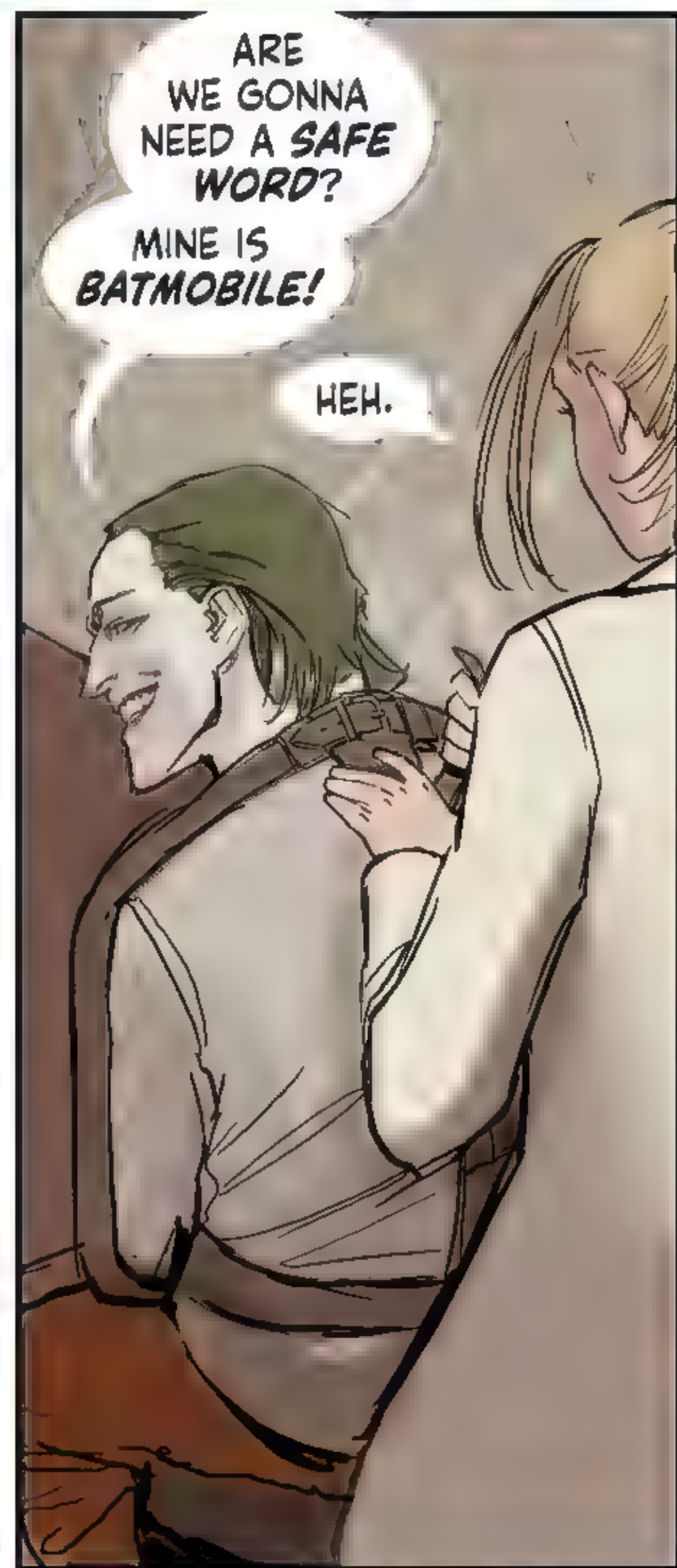
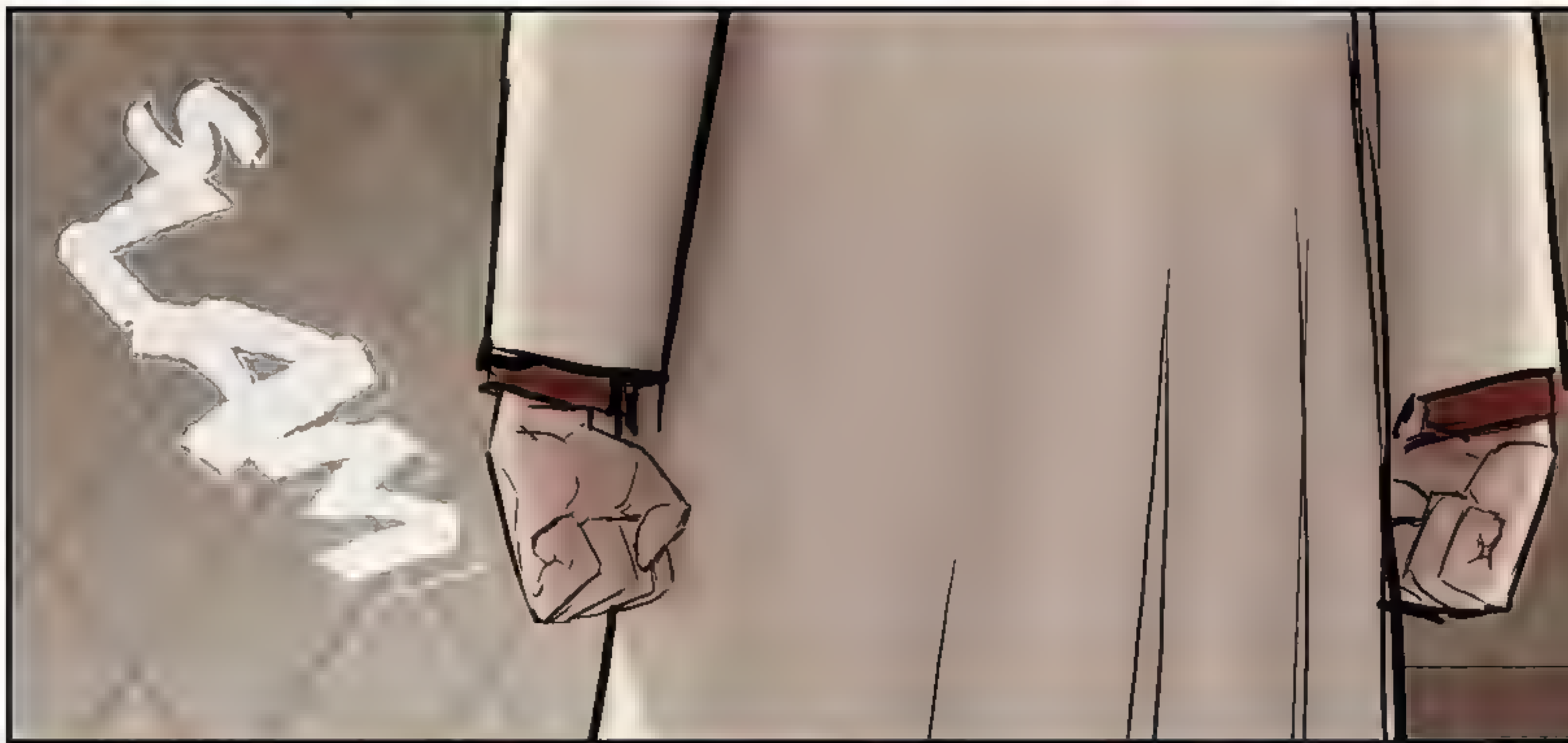


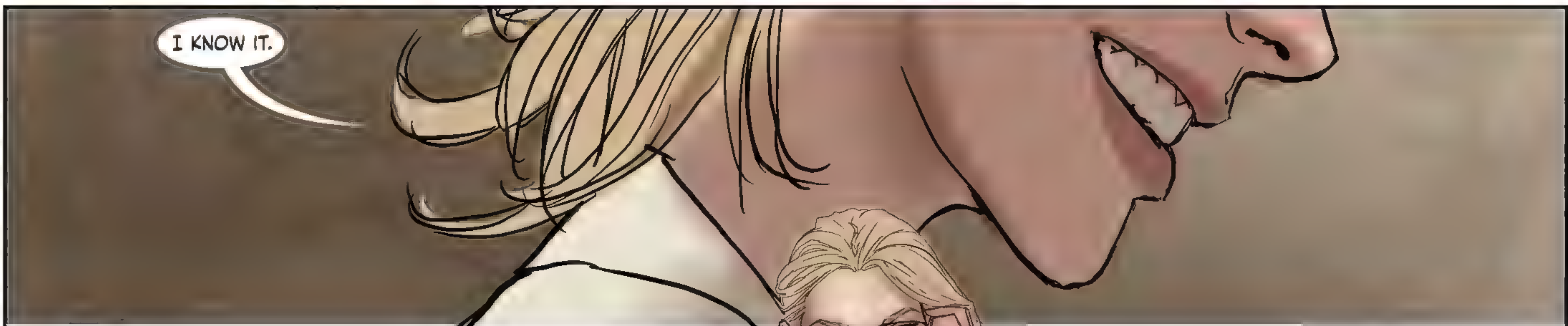
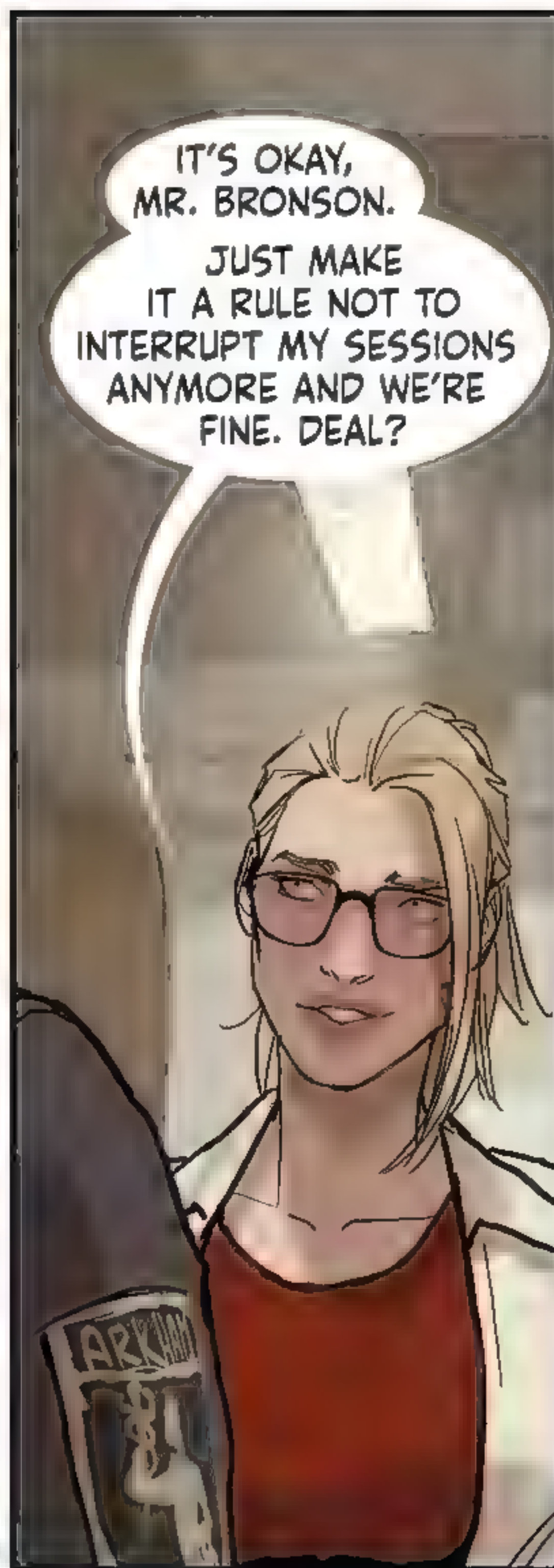
I *KNOW* SHE
SIGNED IT BUT I'M
STILL GONNA CHECK
ON HER.



CRAP!







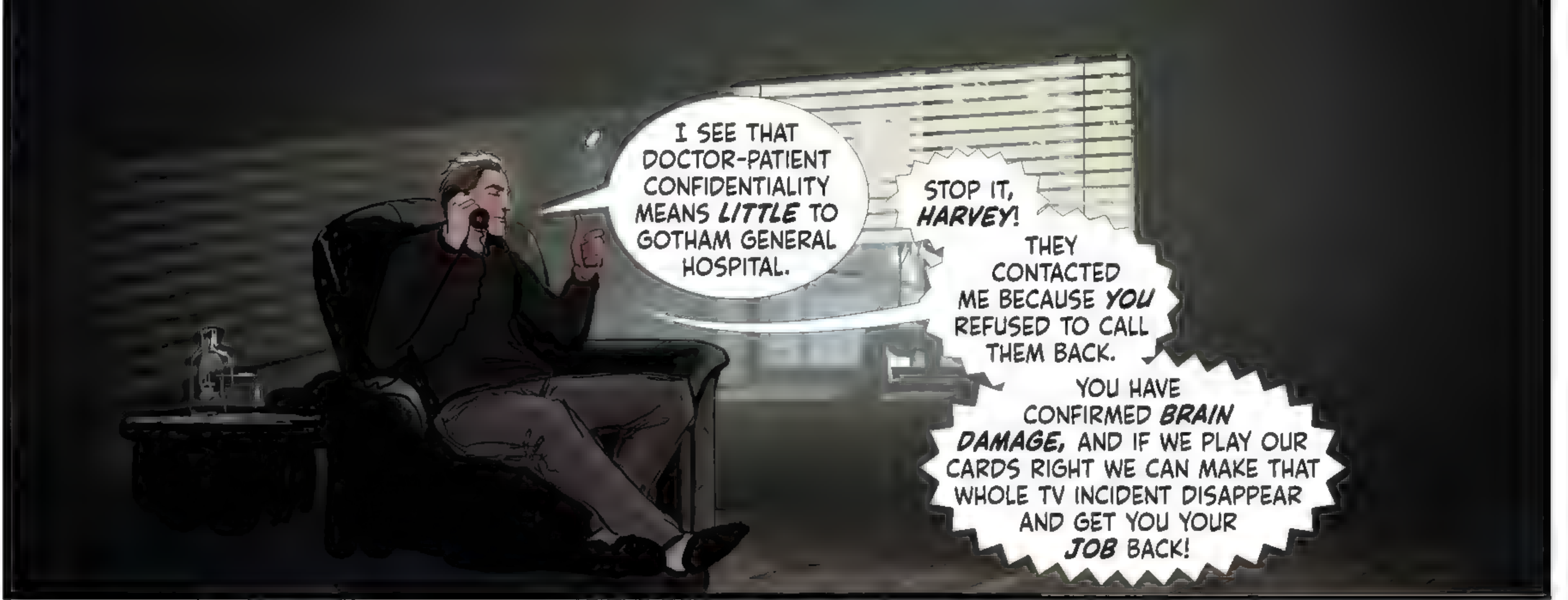
IT'S MY *SMILE*, DR. STRANGE. IT MAKES HIS HEART BEAT FASTER.

AND *THAT'S* HOW I KNOW I CAN HELP HIM. IN FACT, I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN.

I'M THE JOKER'S DOCTOR.



YOU
SPOKE TO MY
DOCTOR?



I SEE THAT
DOCTOR-PATIENT
CONFIDENTIALITY
MEANS *LITTLE* TO
GOTHAM GENERAL
HOSPITAL.

STOP IT,
HARVEY!

THEY
CONTACTED
ME BECAUSE **YOU**
REFUSED TO CALL
THEM BACK.

YOU HAVE
CONFIRMED **BRAIN
DAMAGE**, AND IF WE PLAY OUR
CARDS RIGHT WE CAN MAKE THAT
WHOLE TV INCIDENT DISAPPEAR
AND GET YOU YOUR
JOB BACK!



I DON'T
THINK SO,
WILKES.



HARVEY, COME
ON, MAN. TALK TO ME!
AT LEAST LET ME COME
SEE YOU!



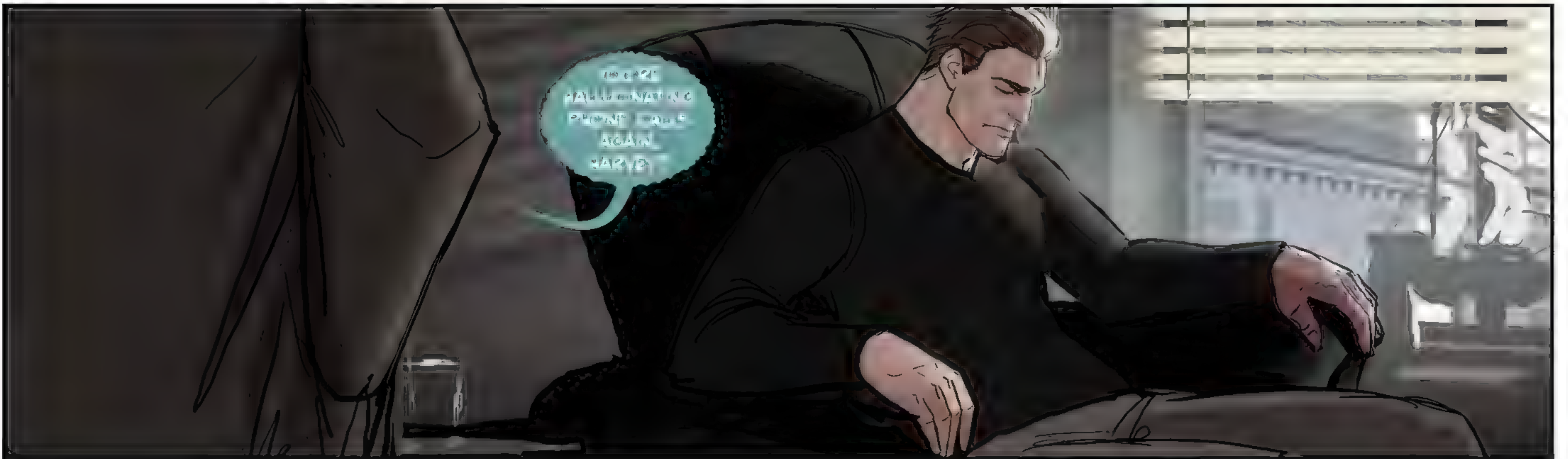
I TOLD
YOU, I'M DOING
FINE.

I JUST
WANT TO RECOVER
ON MY OWN
TERMS.



ALL RIGHT...
JUST KEEP ME IN
THE LOOP,
OKAY?

CLICK



IS THAT
FALLUENATING
PHONE TALK
AGAIN,
HARVEY?



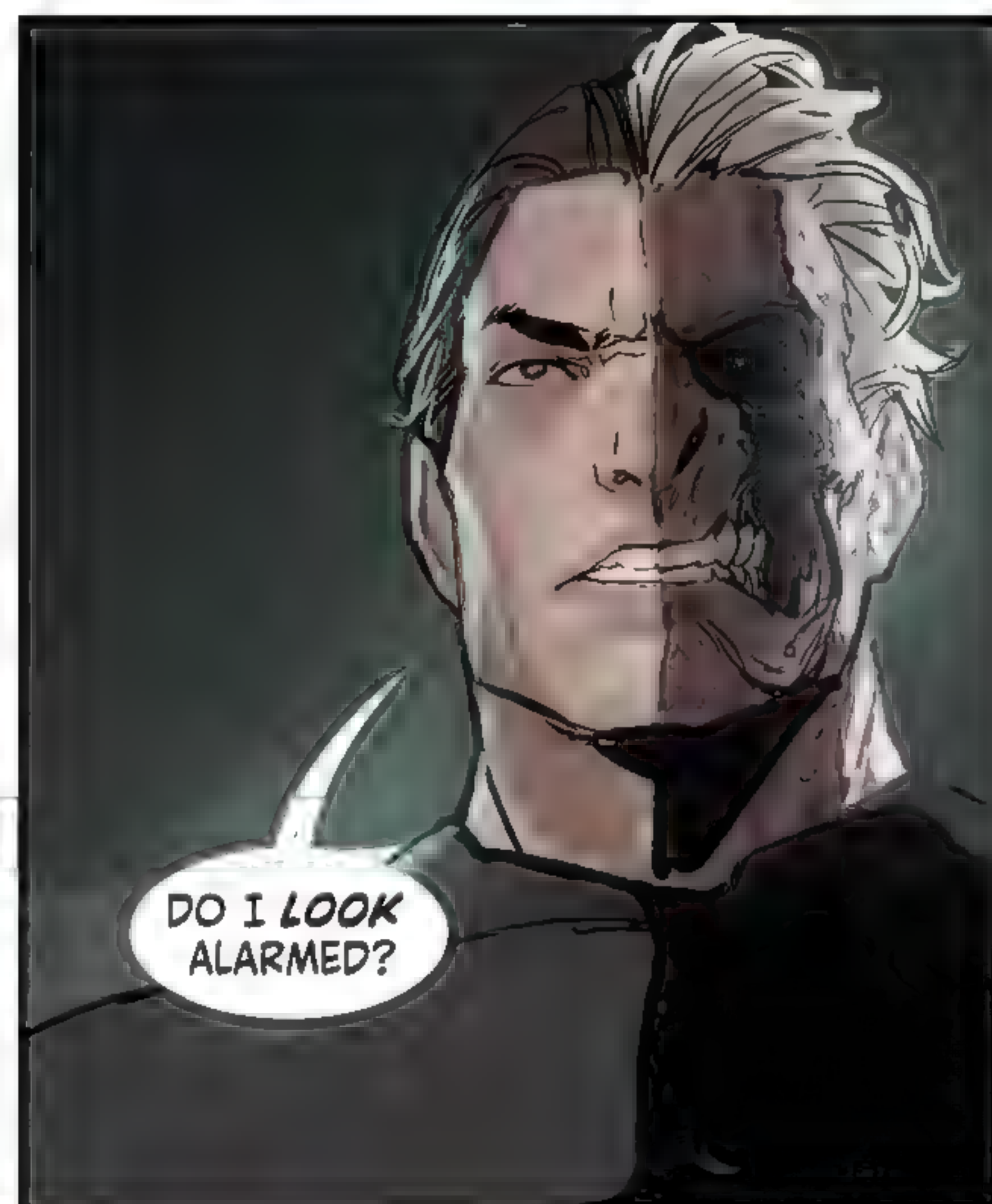
IT WAS A
SHORT EPISODE.
I'M BETTER
NOW.

GOOD
WOLFEY FOR A
MAN OF THE LAW
TO LOSE TRACK OF
REALITY.

KNOCK KNOCK

MR. DENT!
G.C.P.D.!

WE HAVE
VISITORS





YOU'RE WITH
THE EXECUTIONERS.
YOU MURDERED **MARONI**
AFTER HE...**ATTACKED**
ME.

LIKE I SAID,
WE ALL SAW YOUR
SPEECH THAT DAY,
MR. DENT.

INSPIRING **AND**
APPRECIATED.

TALKING
AMONGST OURSELVES,
WE REALIZED WE NEED TO
TAKE THE EXECUTIONERS
TO THE NEXT
LEVEL.

AND
WHO BETTER TO
LEAD US THAN
YOU?

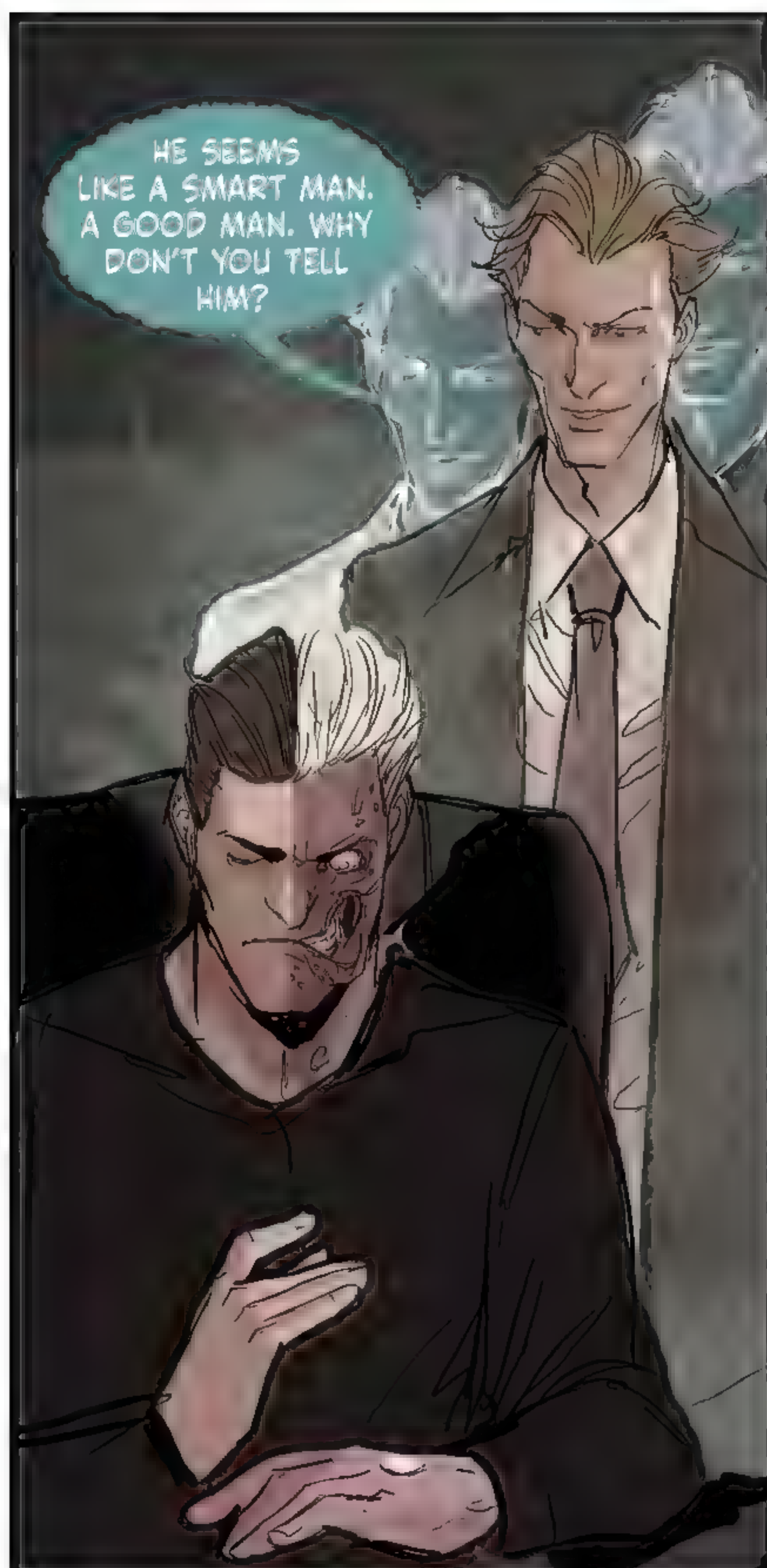
I'M AN
OFFICER OF THE
COURT.

THAT'S RIGHT,
AND YOU SINGLE-HANDEDLY
LED THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE
FALCONE FAMILY IN YOUR SECOND
YEAR AS DISTRICT
ATTORNEY.

I WAS
THERE, SIR.

THE WAY WE
SEE IT, ALL YOU HAVE TO
DO IS **PROSECUTE.** POINT
US AT THE GUILTY PARTIES AND
WE'LL DO THE REST.

AFTER
ALL, THAT'S WHAT
THE EXECUTIONERS
ARE FOR.



HE SEEMS
LIKE A SMART MAN.
A GOOD MAN. WHY
DON'T YOU TELL
HIM?

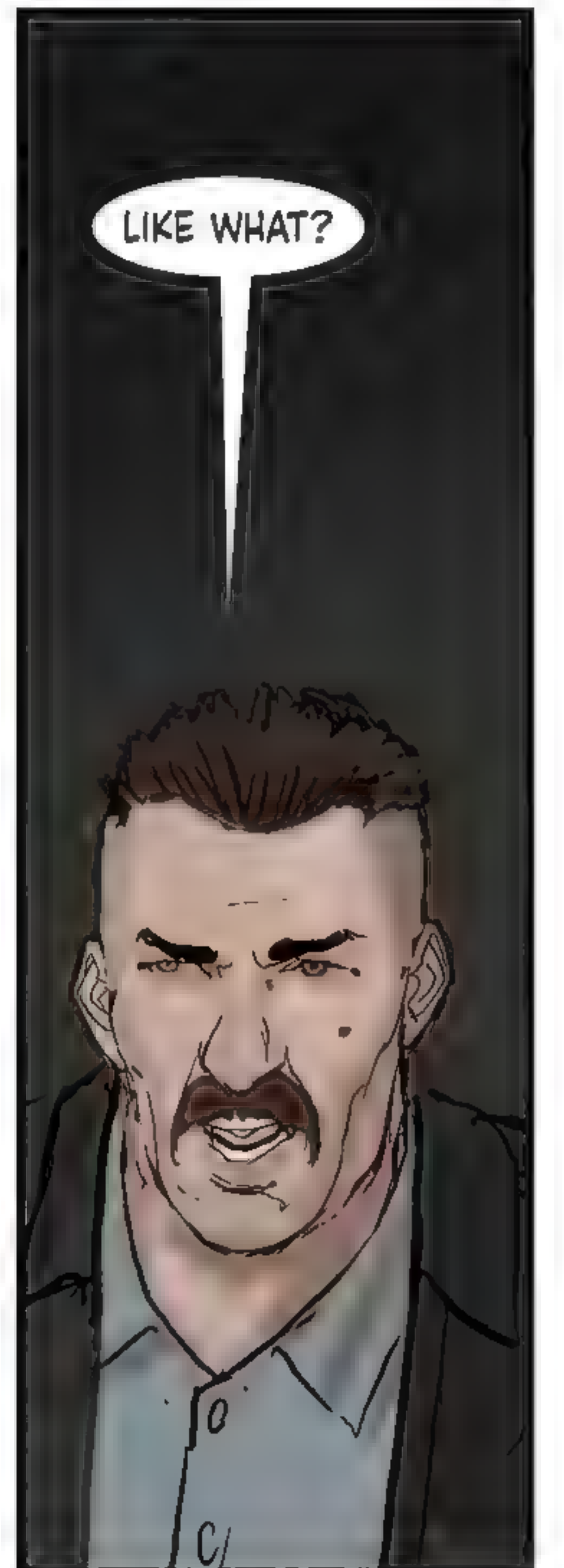
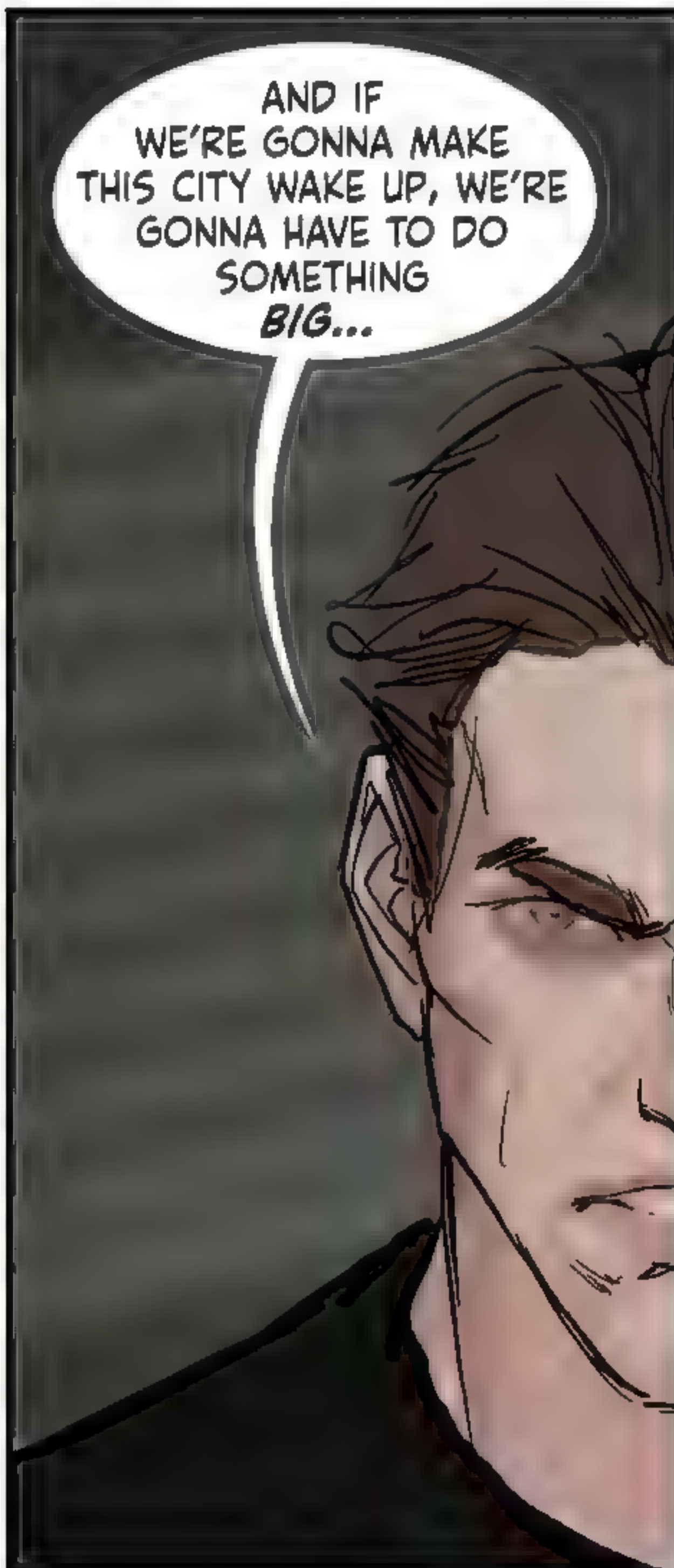
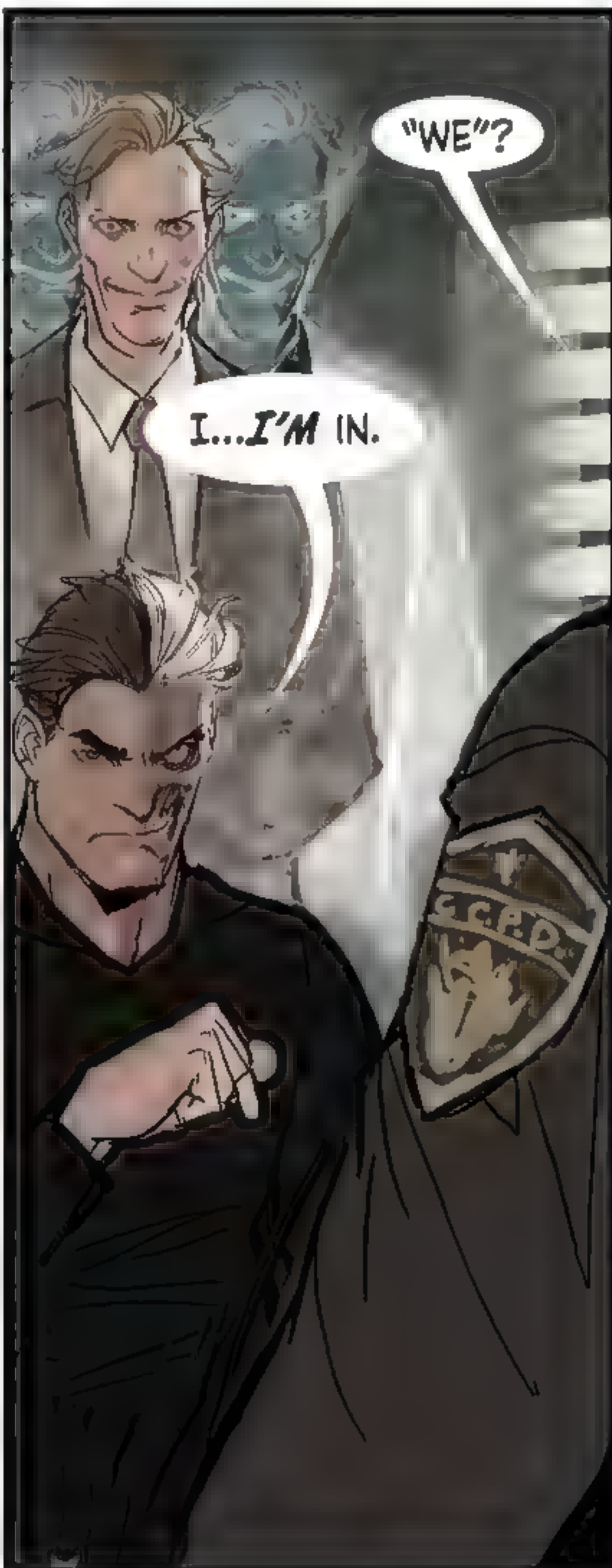
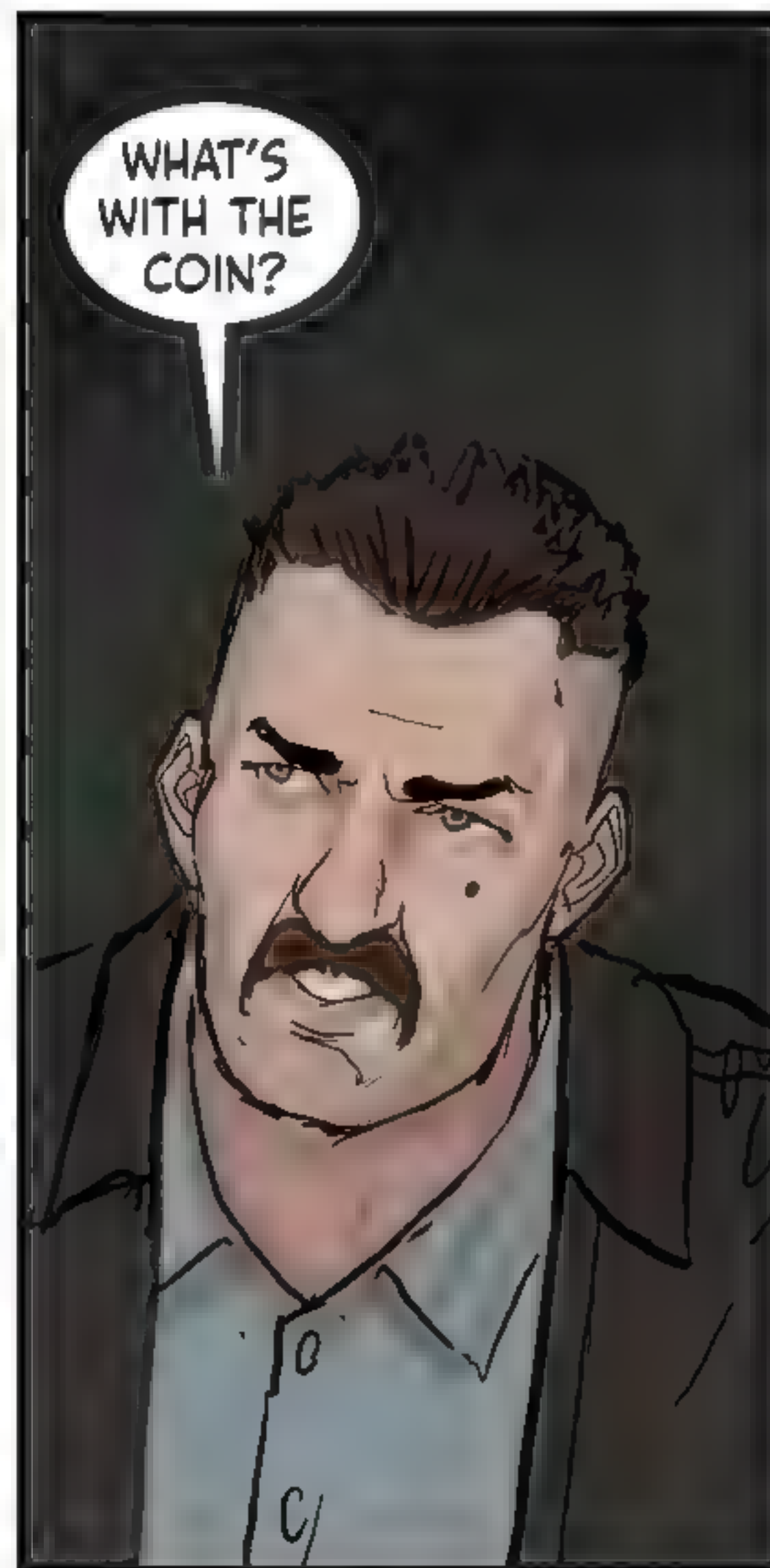


COME ON,
HARVEY! YOU THOUGHT
ABOUT IT FOR YEARS...EVEN
BEFORE MARONI, YOU **KNEW**
THE WAY TO **WAKE UP**
THIS CITY!



BUT YOU
WERE ALL ALONE, THEN. AND
NOW WE'RE TOGETHER IN THIS,
AND **THEY** CAN BE
AS WELL.

WE
CAN DO IT IF
WE SHOW THEM
THE WAY.



WHAT'S WITH THE COIN?

EVER SINCE MY COMA I'VE BEEN HAVING SOME...DIFFICULTIES DISTINGUISHING FANTASY FROM REALITY.

I FIND THIS HELPS MY DECISION-MAKING.
WE'RE IN.

"WE"?

I...I'M IN.

AND IF WE'RE GONNA MAKE THIS CITY WAKE UP, WE'RE GONNA HAVE TO DO SOMETHING BIG...

SOMETHING THAT WILL FORCE THEIR HAND...MAKE THEM AFRAID...MAKE THEM ACT!

LIKE WHAT?

GOTHAM'S GREATEST PROBLEM HAS ALWAYS BEEN ITS POLITICAL COWARDICE AROUND IMPLEMENTING THE DEATH PENALTY.

THE ONE TRUE SOLUTION TO OUR CITY'S UNIQUE BRAND OF REPEAT OFFENDERS.

SO I SAY WE LET LOOSE THE WOLVES!

ALL OF THEM! WE STAGE THE GREATEST PRISON BREAKOUT EVER, SETTING ALL THIS CITY'S MONSTERS BACK UPON IT.

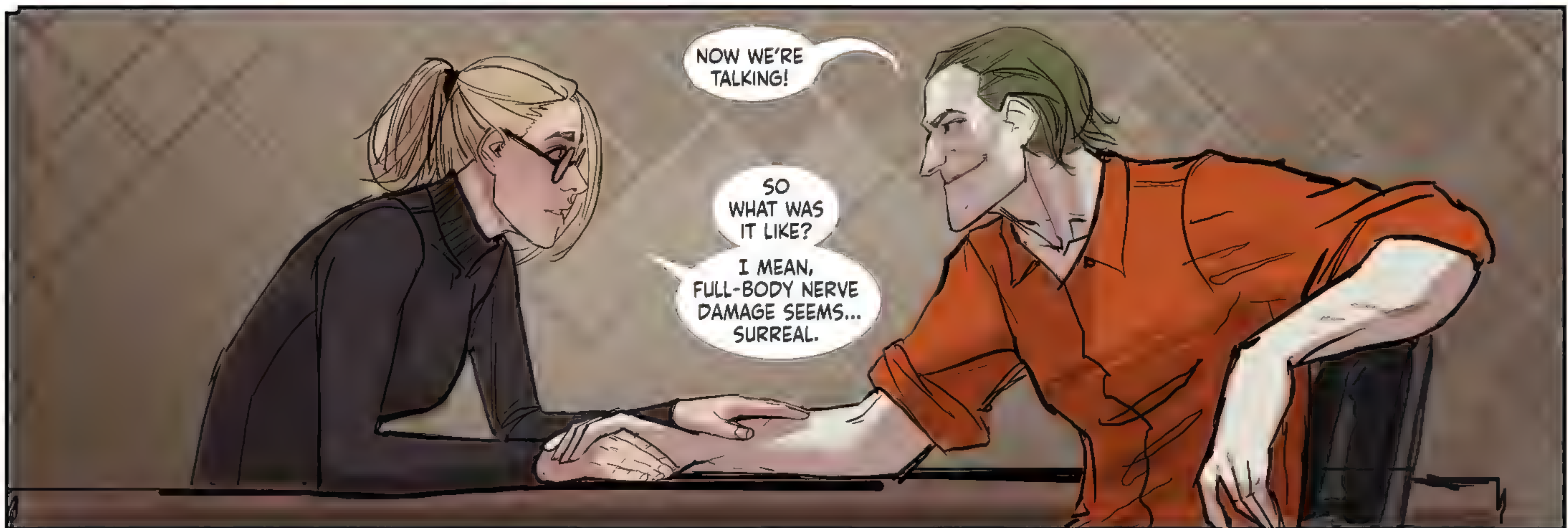
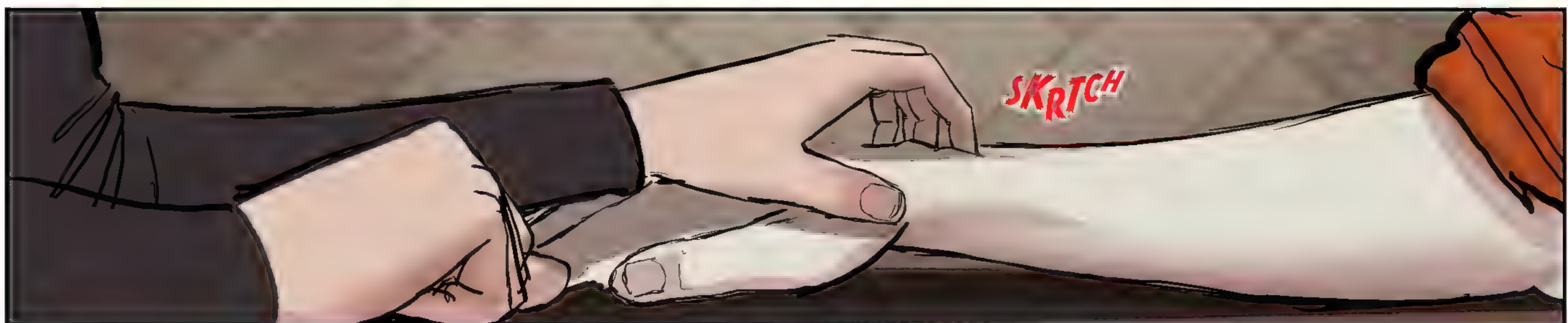
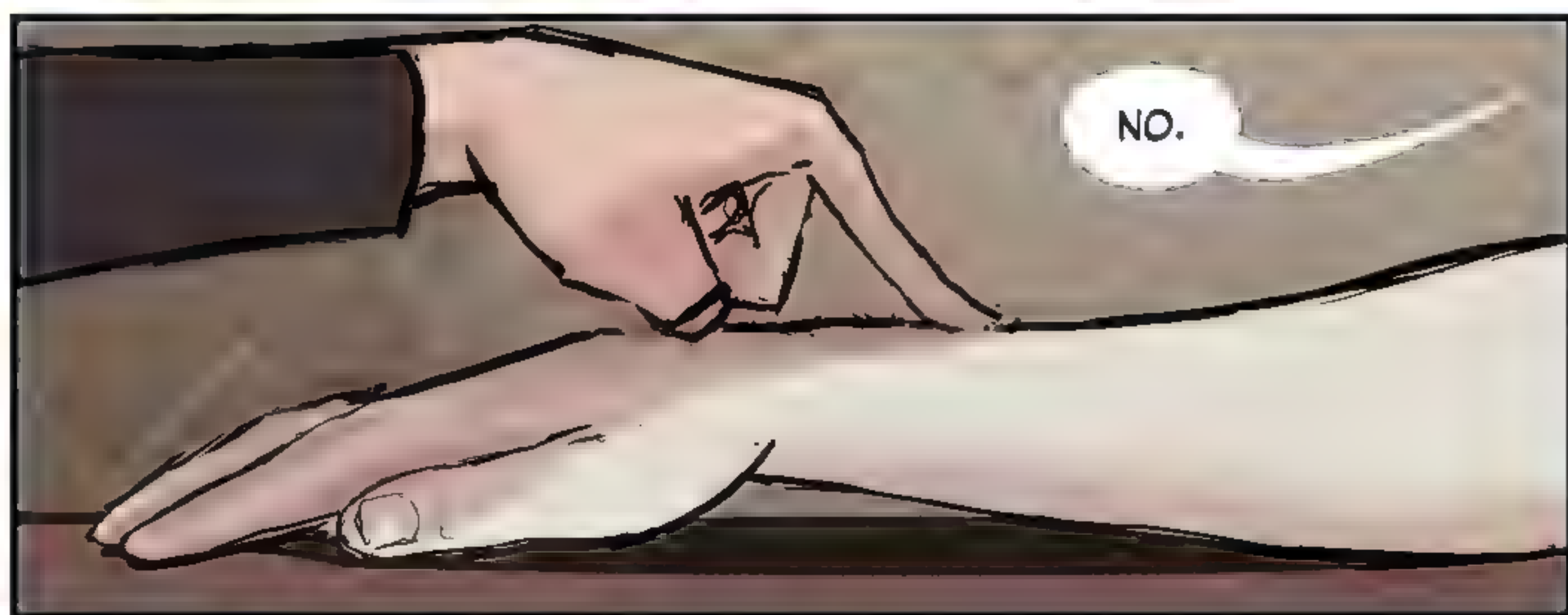
A NIGHT OF BLOOD TO FORCE THE POLITICIANS TO ACT!

WE'LL HAVE ONE CHANCE, THOUGH...ONE CHOICE.

SO...HEADS, IT'S BLACKGATE PENITENTIARY.

TAILS...

ARKHAM ASYLUM.





INTENSE, HUH?

IT WAS A SLOW PROCESS, BUT THERE WAS HOPE. LITTLE BY LITTLE HE OPENED UP TO ME. BIT BY BIT, I LEARNED MORE ABOUT HIM.

ALSO THAT NIGHT I MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE FANTASIZED ABOUT MY NAILS IN HIM.



AHEM. ANYWAYS, IT WAS GOING GREAT. MR. BRONSON WAS A MAN OF HIS WORD AND MY SESSIONS WITH MR. JAY REMAINED UNINTERRUPTED.

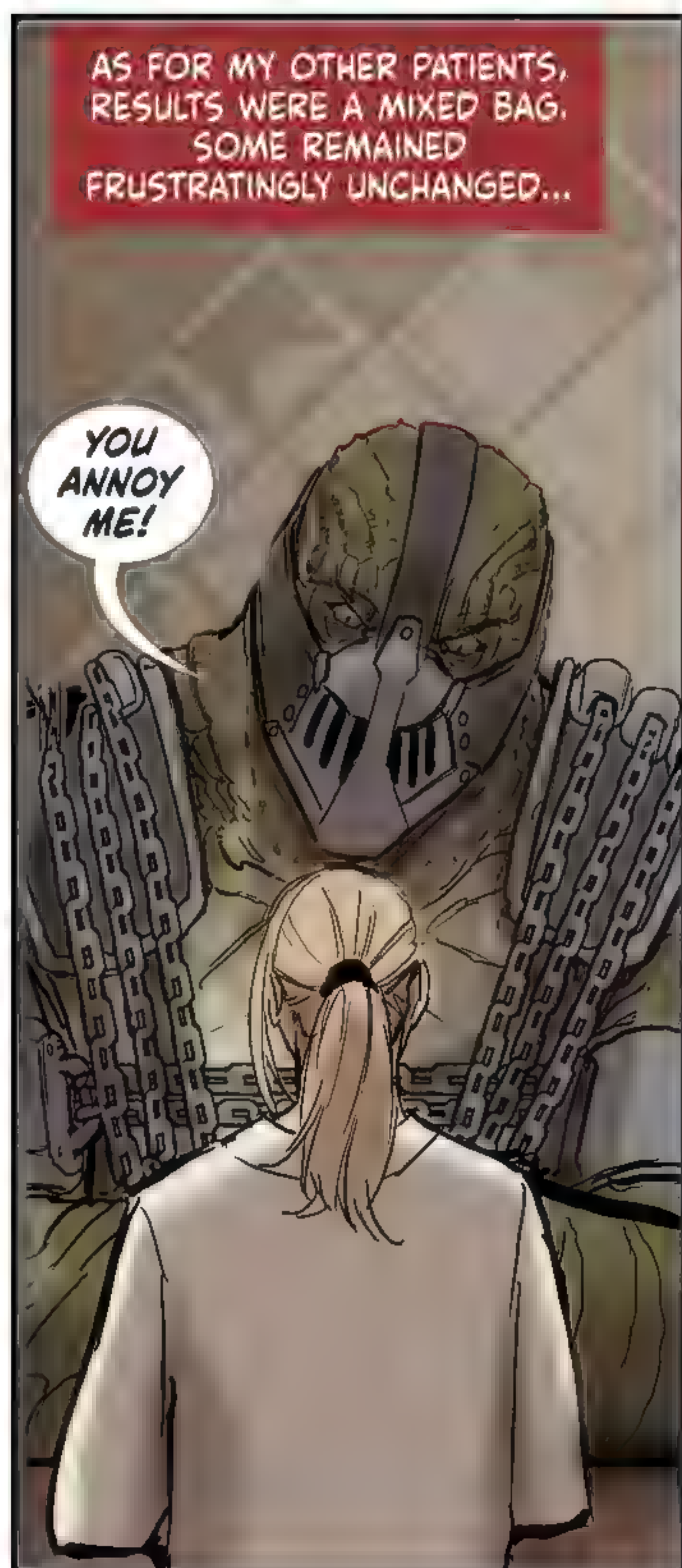


AND YOU KNOW WHAT? SOON I REALIZED THAT ARKHAM ITSELF HAD GROWN ON ME. THE BUSY DAYS AND THE LONG NIGHT SHIFTS.



I'D OFTEN MAKE USE OF THE TIME TO VISIT MR. JAY AND INDULGE IN PRODUCTIVE CONVERSATION.

GO FISH.



AS FOR MY OTHER PATIENTS, RESULTS WERE A MIXED BAG. SOME REMAINED FRUSTRATINGLY UNCHANGED...

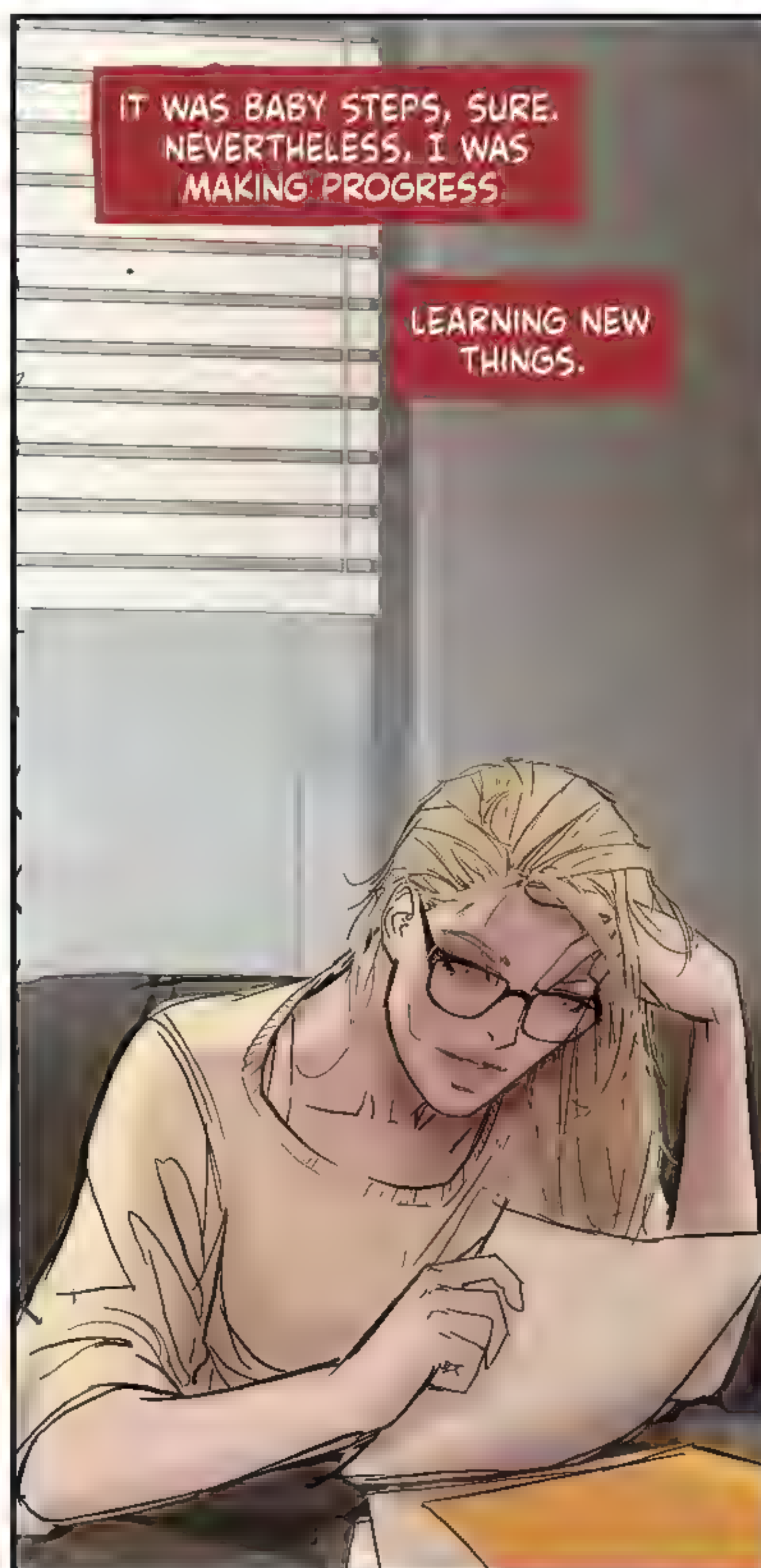
YOU ANNOY ME!



...WHILE OTHERS SHOWED PROMISE.

IT'S NOT MUCH, BUT I THOUGHT YOU WOULD ENJOY SOME **SUNLIGHT** GIVEN YOUR SPECIAL CONDITION.

I... UH... THANK YOU.



IT WAS BABY STEPS, SURE. NEVERTHELESS, I WAS MAKING PROGRESS.

LEARNING NEW THINGS.



DISCARDING OLD MISCONCEPTIONS...

WEEKS TURNED TO MONTHS. EVEN THOUGH MY SCHEDULE SAID *SESSIONS*, WHAT WE SHARED WERE *DATES*... MINUS THE WINING AND DINING, AND WITH EXCESSIVE SECURITY RESTRAINTS THROWN INTO THE MIX.

AND YES, I'M *AWARE* THAT SOUNDS LIKE SOME DEVELOPING *FETISH*...

SO THE JACKET STAYS ON TODAY?

YEAH, I WANT TO GET SOME WORK DONE AND YOU GET HANDSY.

POT? KETTLE?

==AH==

BUT THAT *WASN'T* IT. TRUTH WAS I HAD FALLEN *IN LOVE*. IT WAS A THOUGHT THAT WOULD'VE TERRIFIED ME ONCE, BUT NOW MADE ME START EVERY DAY WITH A SMILE.

I EVEN RECEIVED NEWS THAT THE FINANCIAL BOARD WAS ALLOCATING MORE WAYNE GRANT MONEY TO MY RESEARCH, MEANING ASSISTANTS AND EQUIPMENT! IT WAS ALL WITHIN MY REACH.

EVERYTHING WAS COMING UP HARLEY!

WELL, ALMOST EVERYTHING.

I DON'T KNOW...THE GUY IS JUST *CREEPY*.

I GUESS IT'S GOOD THAT HE'S HERE TO INTERROGATE THE JOKER AND NOT *YOU*.

INTERROGATE? WAIT, PRIYA, WHO ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

THE BATMAN.

HE'S *HERE?* WITH JAY?

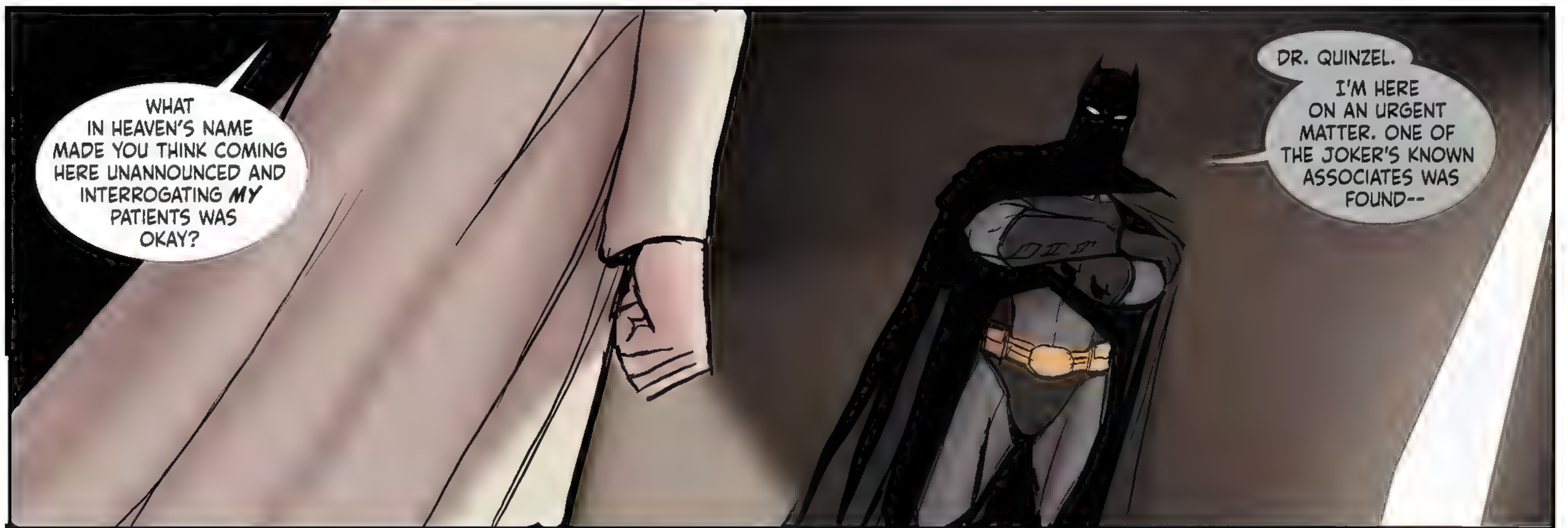
UH, YEAH?

WHO AUTHORIZED THIS?!

UM... NOBODY? HE'S *BATMAN!*

OH FOR FUCK'S SAKE!

GET AWAY FROM MY PATIENT!



WHAT
IN HEAVEN'S NAME
MADE YOU THINK COMING
HERE UNANNOUNCED AND
INTERROGATING *MY*
PATIENTS WAS
OKAY?

DR. QUINZEL.
I'M HERE
ON AN URGENT
MATTER. ONE OF
THE JOKER'S KNOWN
ASSOCIATES WAS
FOUND--



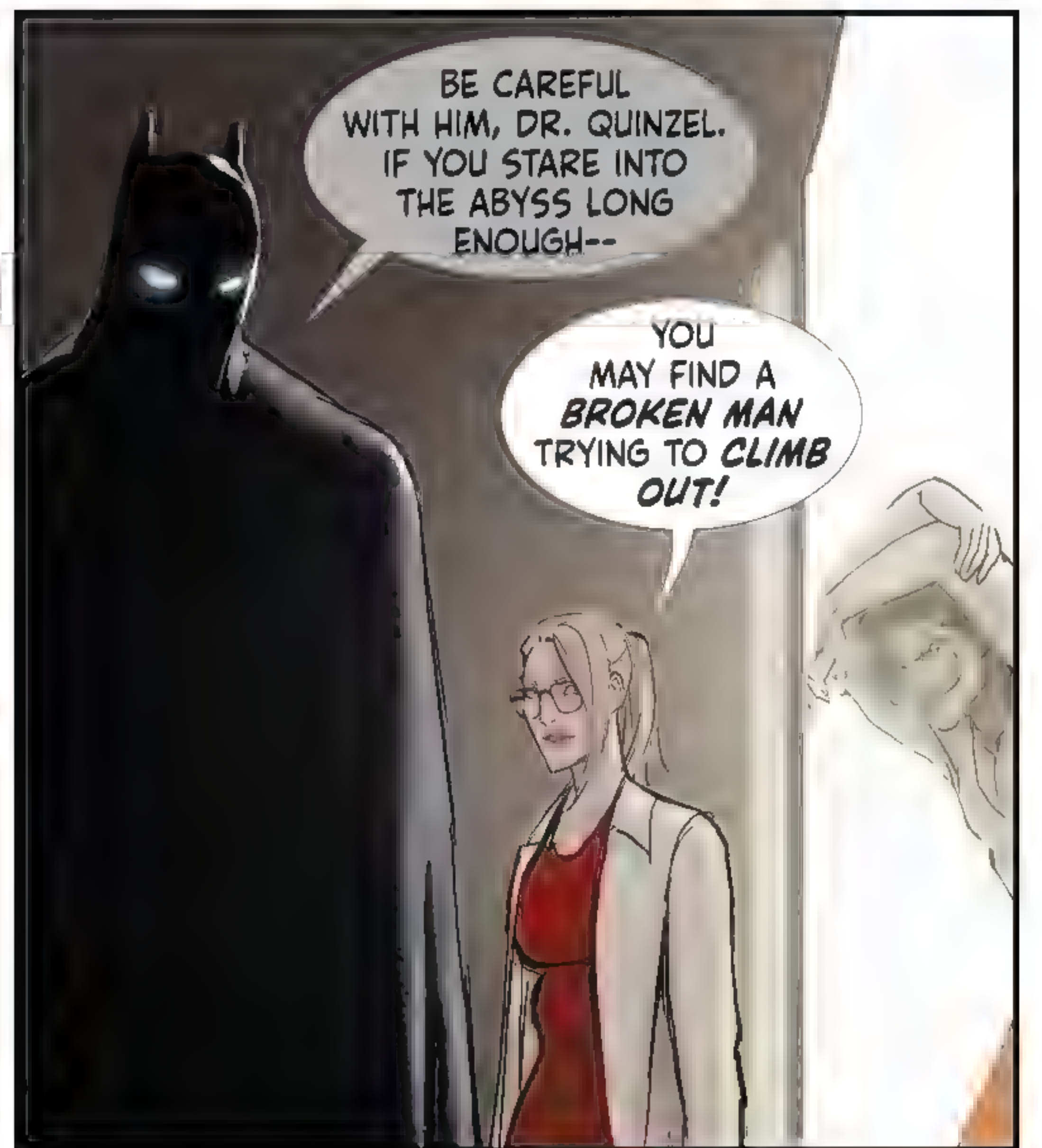
I DON'T CARE!

I AM *NOT*
COMMISSIONER GORDON
AND *YOU* ARE NOT
WELCOME TO DO AS YOU
PLEASE WITH MY
PATIENTS!

I DIDN'T
WORK FIVE MONTHS
WITH THE JOKER FOR
YOU TO *RUIN IT*
NOW!



VERY WELL.
I'LL LEAVE HIM IN
YOUR HANDS.
HOWEVER...



BE CAREFUL
WITH HIM, DR. QUINZEL.
IF YOU STARE INTO
THE ABYSS LONG
ENOUGH--

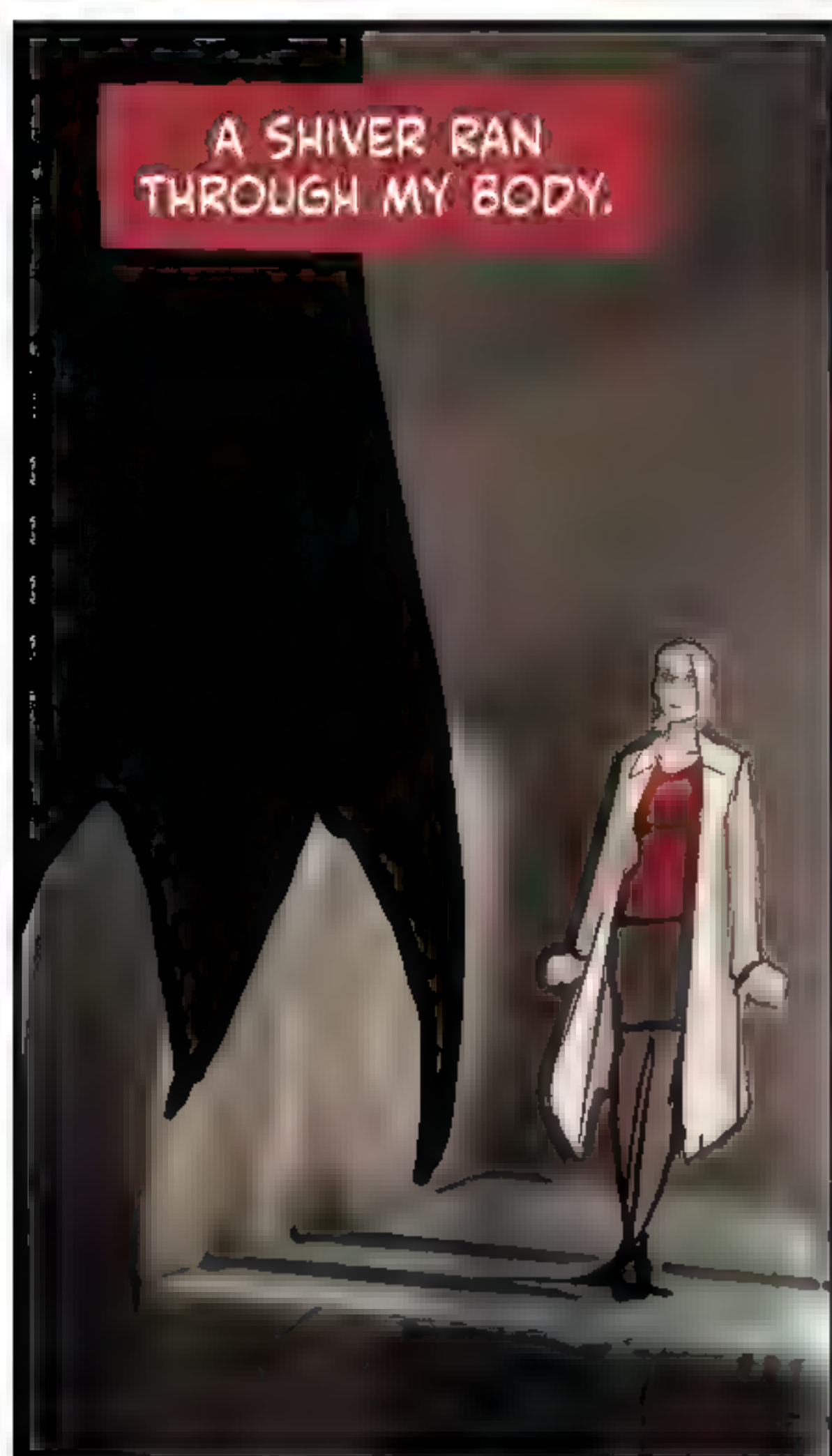
YOU
MAY FIND A
BROKEN MAN
TRYING TO *CLIMB*
OUT!



A DIFFICULT
TASK WHEN YOU
KEEP *BREAKING*
HIS BONES,
BATMAN!



RIGHT THERE, I REALIZED
JUST HOW MUCH THIS FELT
LIKE MY DREAM WITH
THE BAT BEAST.



A SHIVER RAN
THROUGH MY BODY.



DAMN...THAT
WAS...

AMAZING!

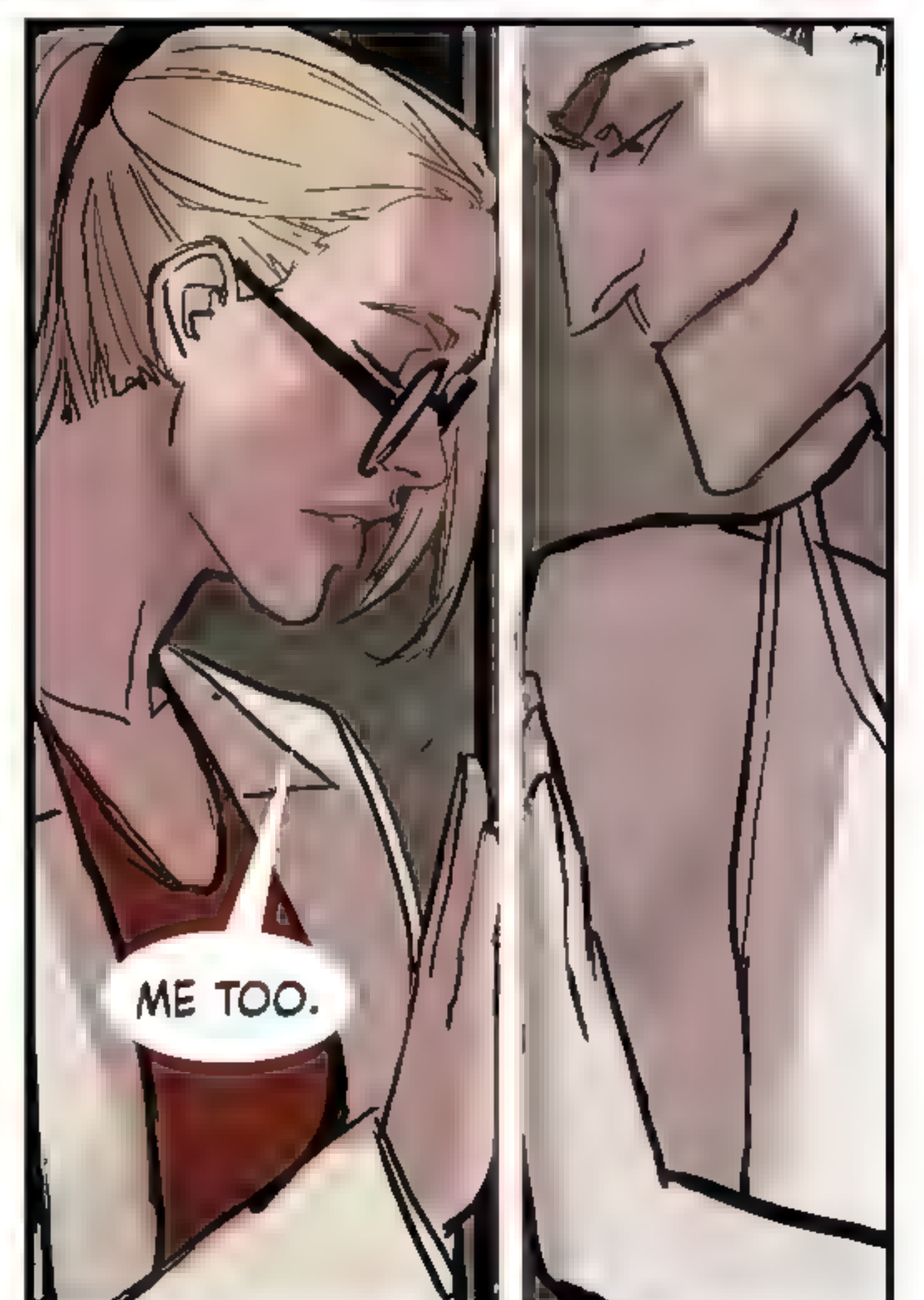
I WAS
GONNA SAY
SCARY.



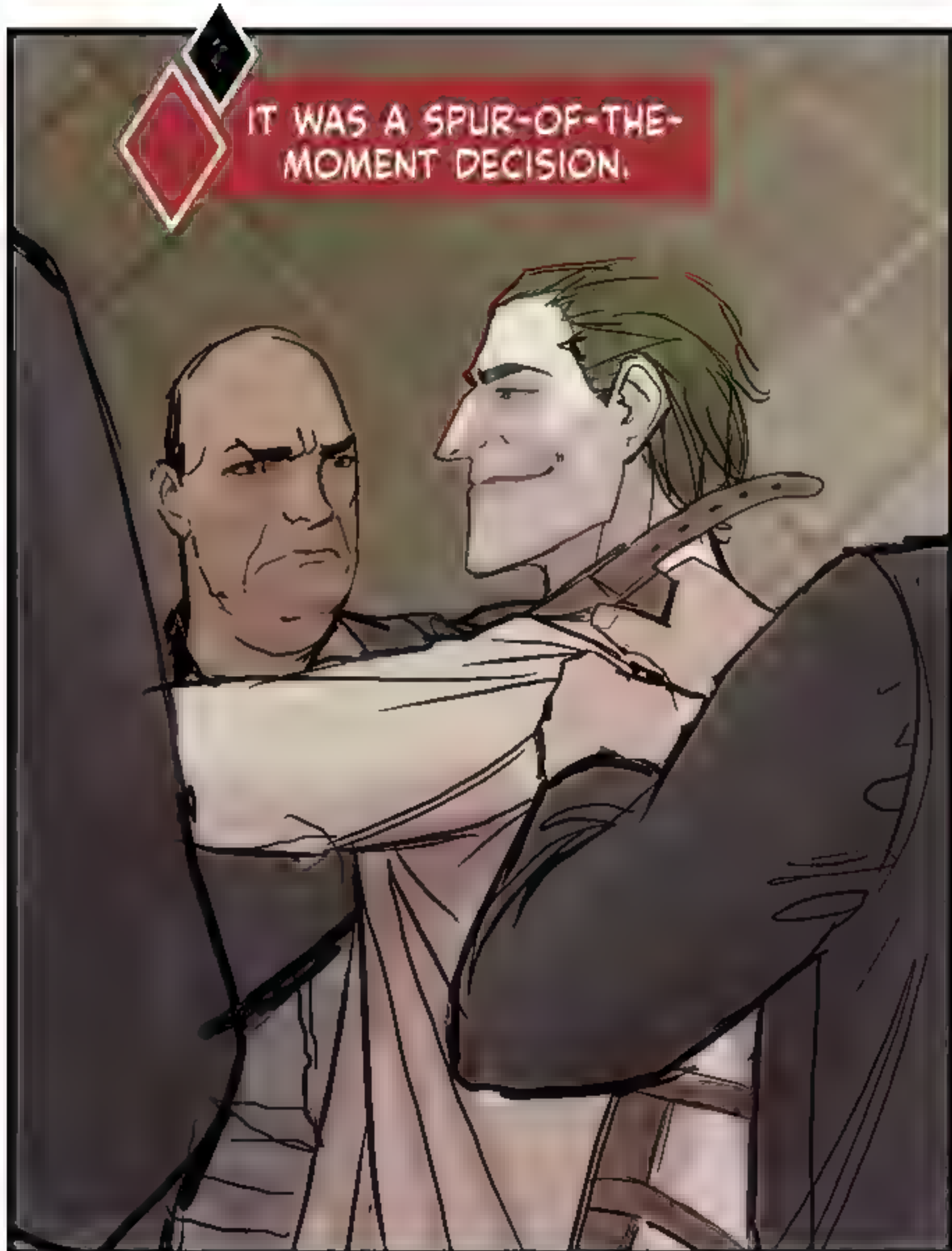
HEY, DOC.

I THINK
I'M READY
FOR SOME
THERAPY.

YEAH...



ME TOO.



IT WAS A SPUR-OF-THE-MOMENT DECISION.



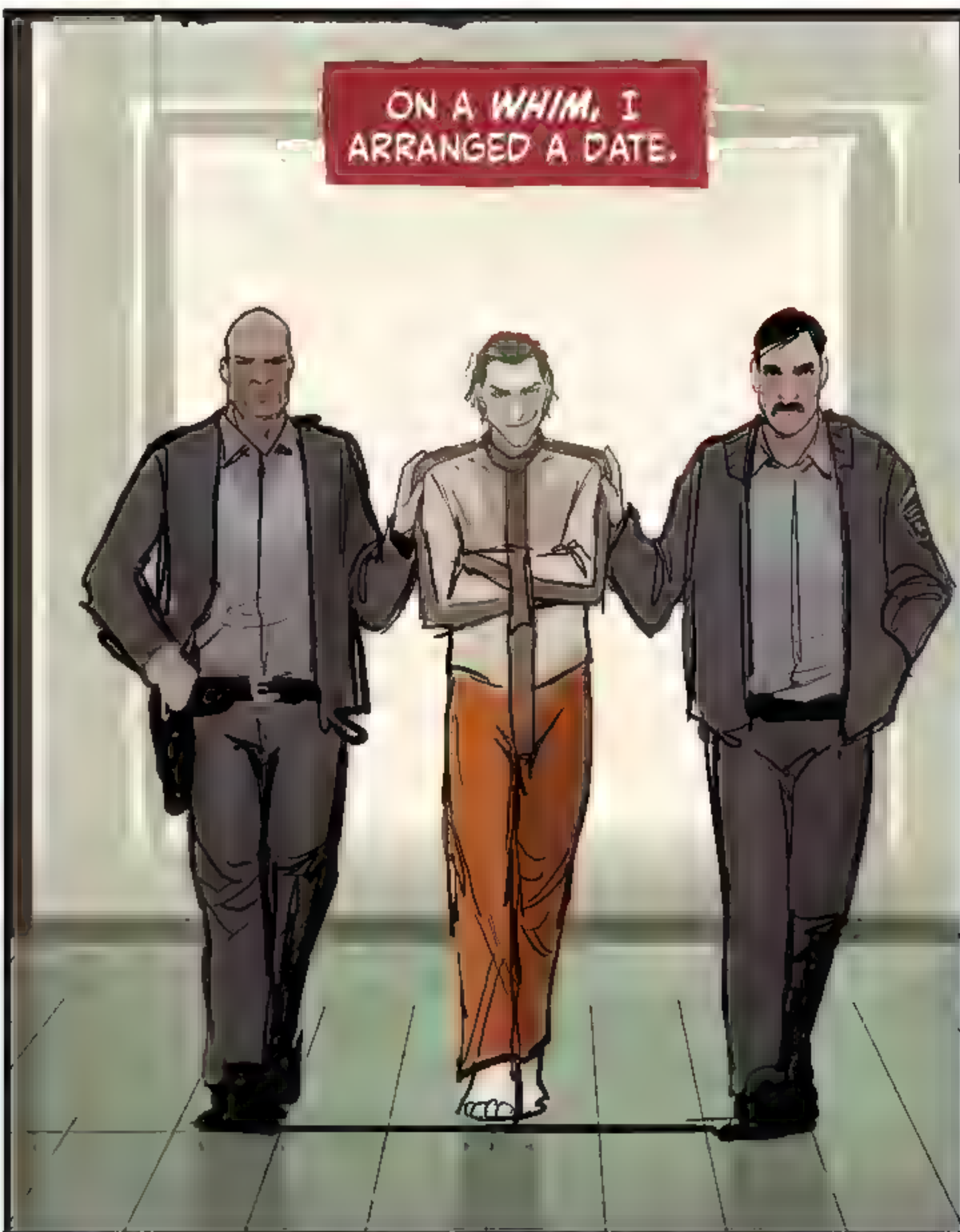
AND I'D BEEN ON THE SPUR-OF-THE-MOMENT PILL FOR ABOUT TWO WEEKS.



BECAUSE HE WAS THE SUBJECT OF MOST OF MY SPUR-OF-THE-MOMENT WAKING THOUGHTS...



NOTHING. PREMEDITATED ABOUT IT.



ON A WHIM, I ARRANGED A DATE.

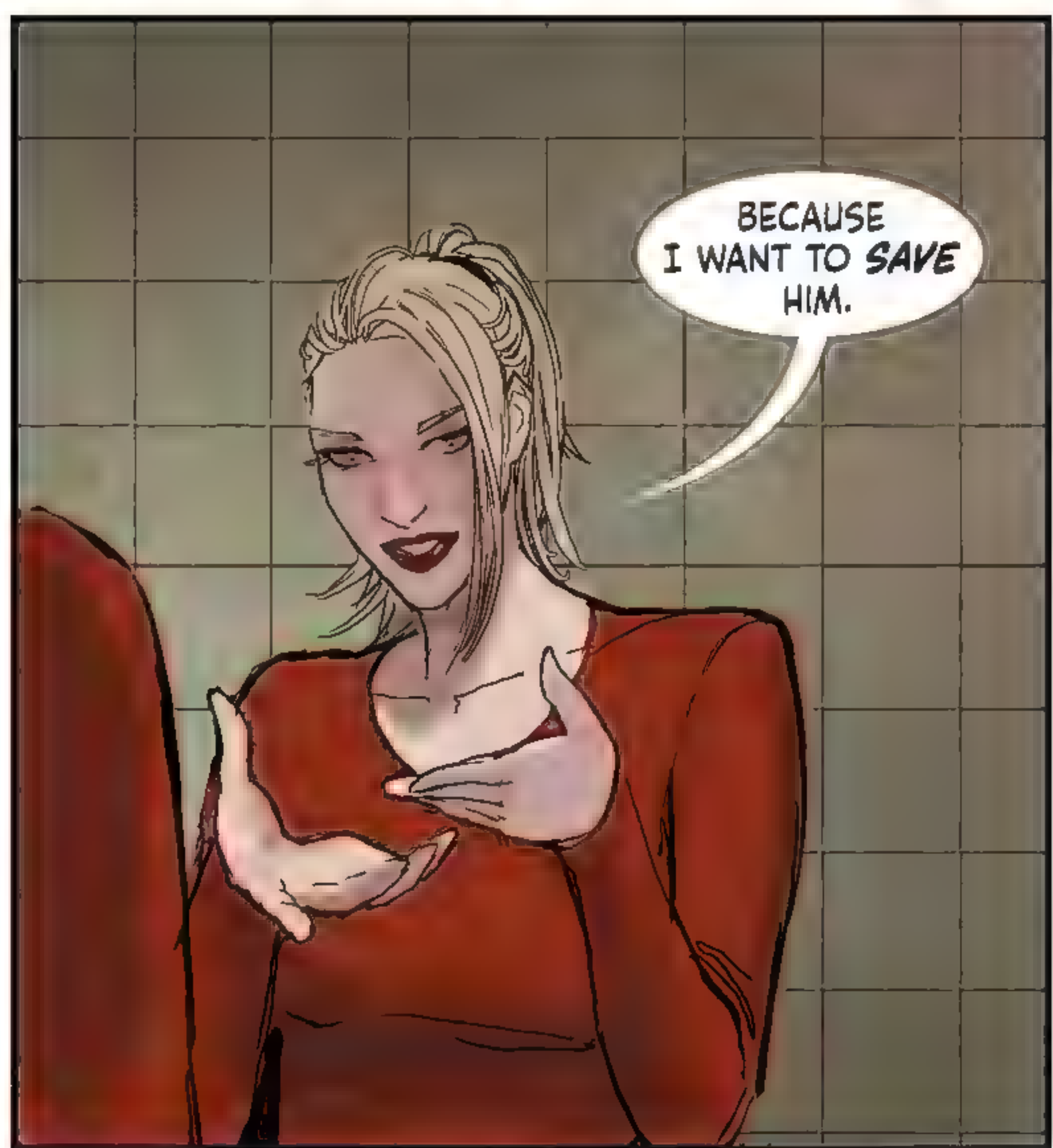


ON A WHIM, I FOUND MYSELF CARRYING MAKEUP FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE COLLEGE.



AND MY OH MY, WHO KNEW WHERE MY NEXT WHIM MIGHT TAKE ME...

OH MY GOD, HARLEY! WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING?





SO YOU BELIEVE THERE IS **HOPE** FOR THEM?

I HOPE THERE IS.

EVEN **THE JOKER**?

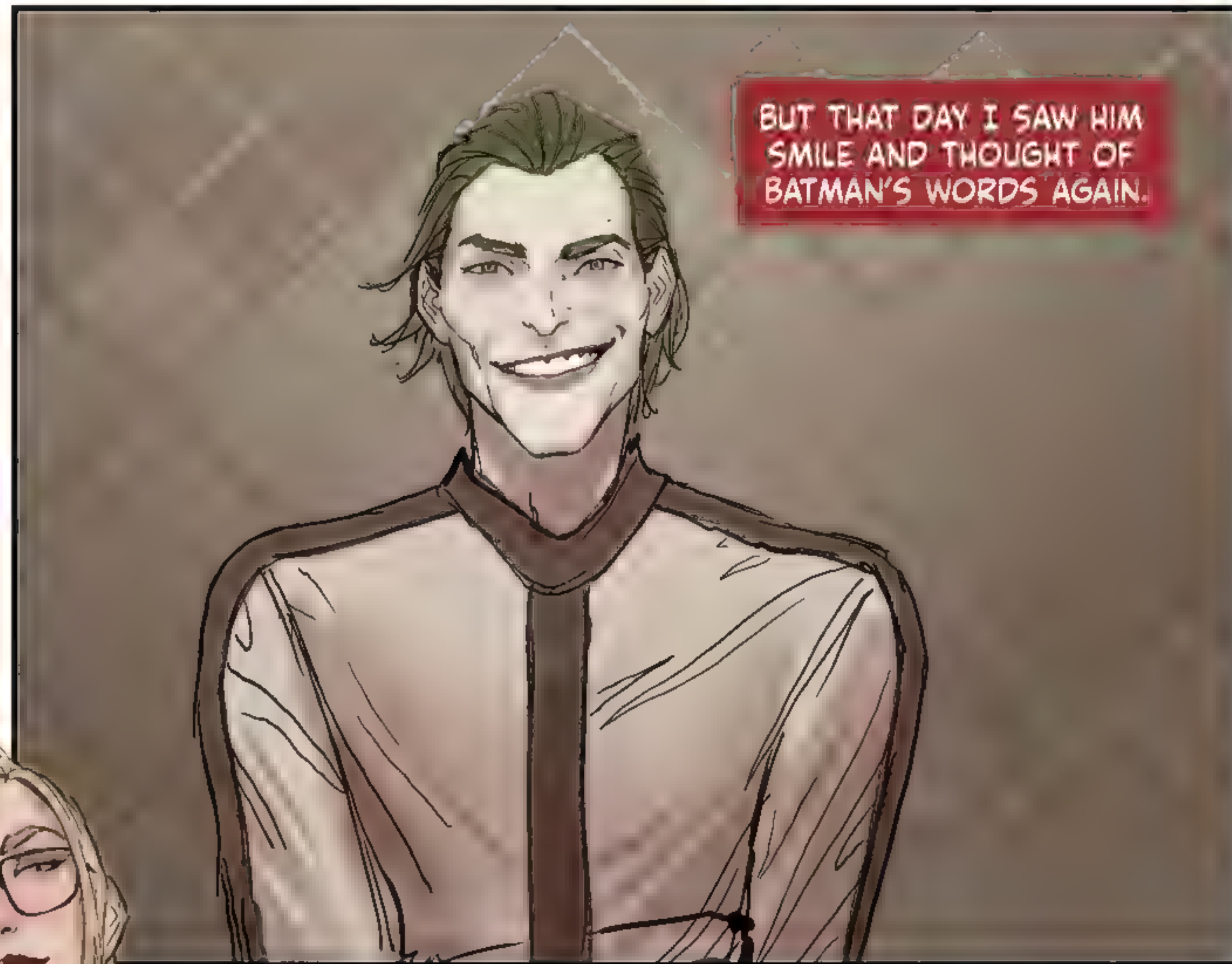
DO I THINK HE CAN BE HELPED?
MANY HAVE TRIED.

HE DIDN'T BELIEVE IT FOR A SECOND. HE DIDN'T THINK JAY COULD BE HELPED.

AND IT HAD **INFURIATED** ME.



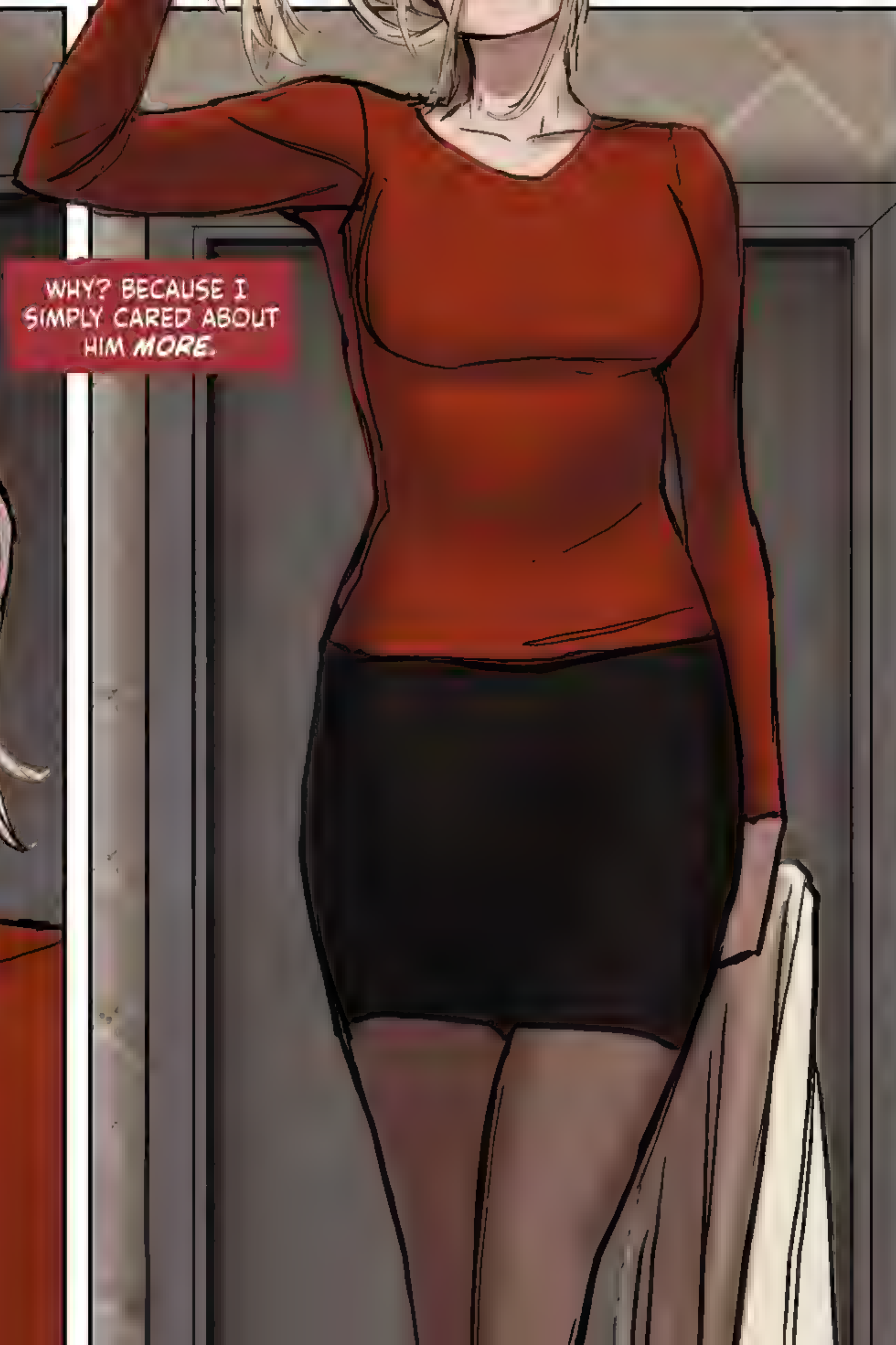
BECAUSE...IT MADE ME FEEL **GUILTY**. BECAUSE I'D FELT THE SAME ONCE...



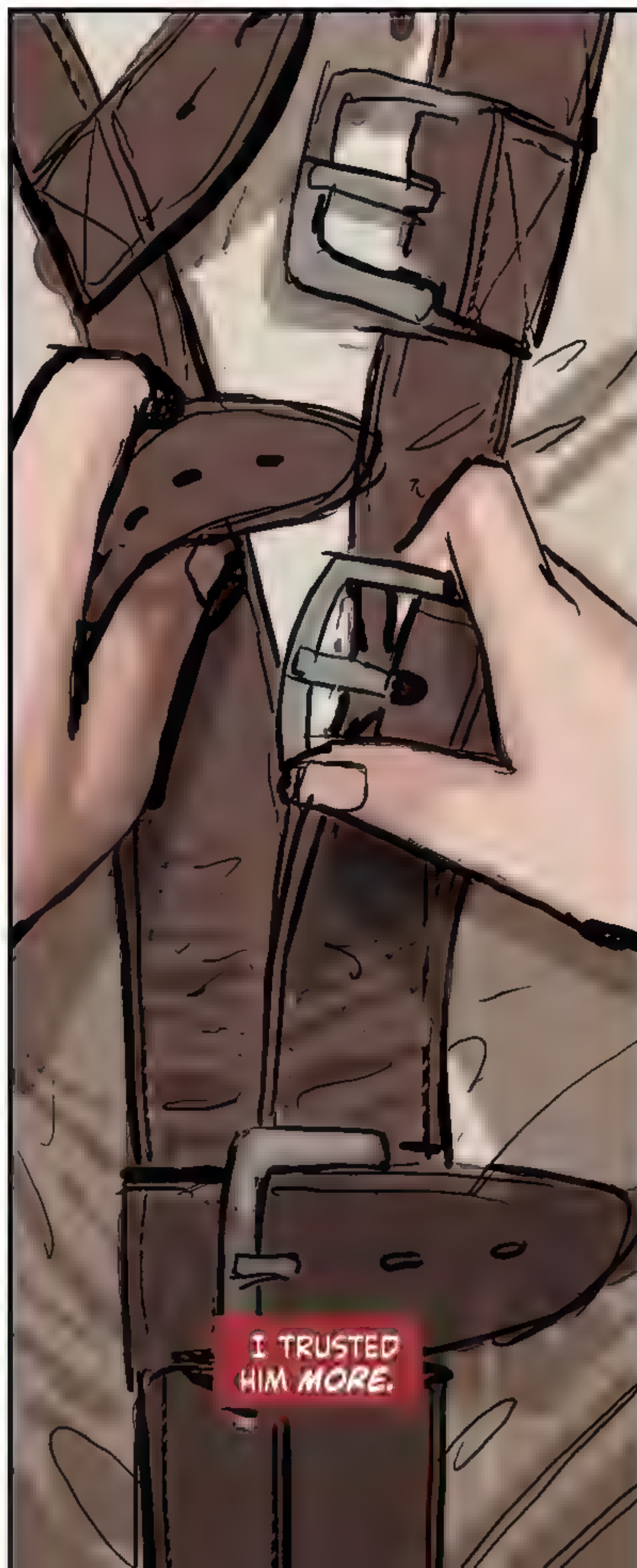
BUT THAT DAY I SAW HIM SMILE AND THOUGHT OF BATMAN'S WORDS AGAIN.



MANY HAVE TRIED...ME? I'LL **SUCCEED**.



WHY? BECAUSE I SIMPLY CARED ABOUT HIM **MORE**.



I TRUSTED HIM **MORE**.

SO WHAT ABOUT THE WHOLE "YOU GET HANDSY AND I WANT TO GET SOME WORK DONE" THING?

I'M EXPANDING MY METHODOLOGY.

WELL, WHO AM I TO DEBATE YOUR SCIENTIFIC METHOD?

YOU ARE THE ONE WITH THE SMART GLASSES, AFTER ALL.

YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT! NOW TAKE OFF YOUR CLOTHES! DOCTOR'S ORDERS!





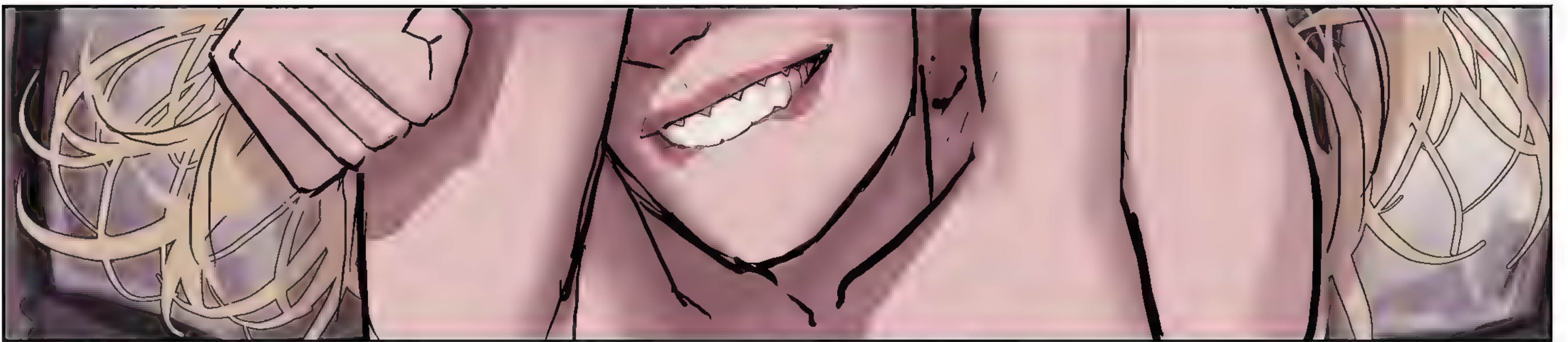
BEFORE I SANK INTO
THE BLISS, I REMEMBER
CHUCKLING SOFTLY.

HE WHISPERED,
WHAT'S FUNNY?

I SAID, I WANTED TO
HEAL YOUR SCARS,
BUT HERE I AM ADDING
SOME OF MY OWN.

I THINK HE SMILED.





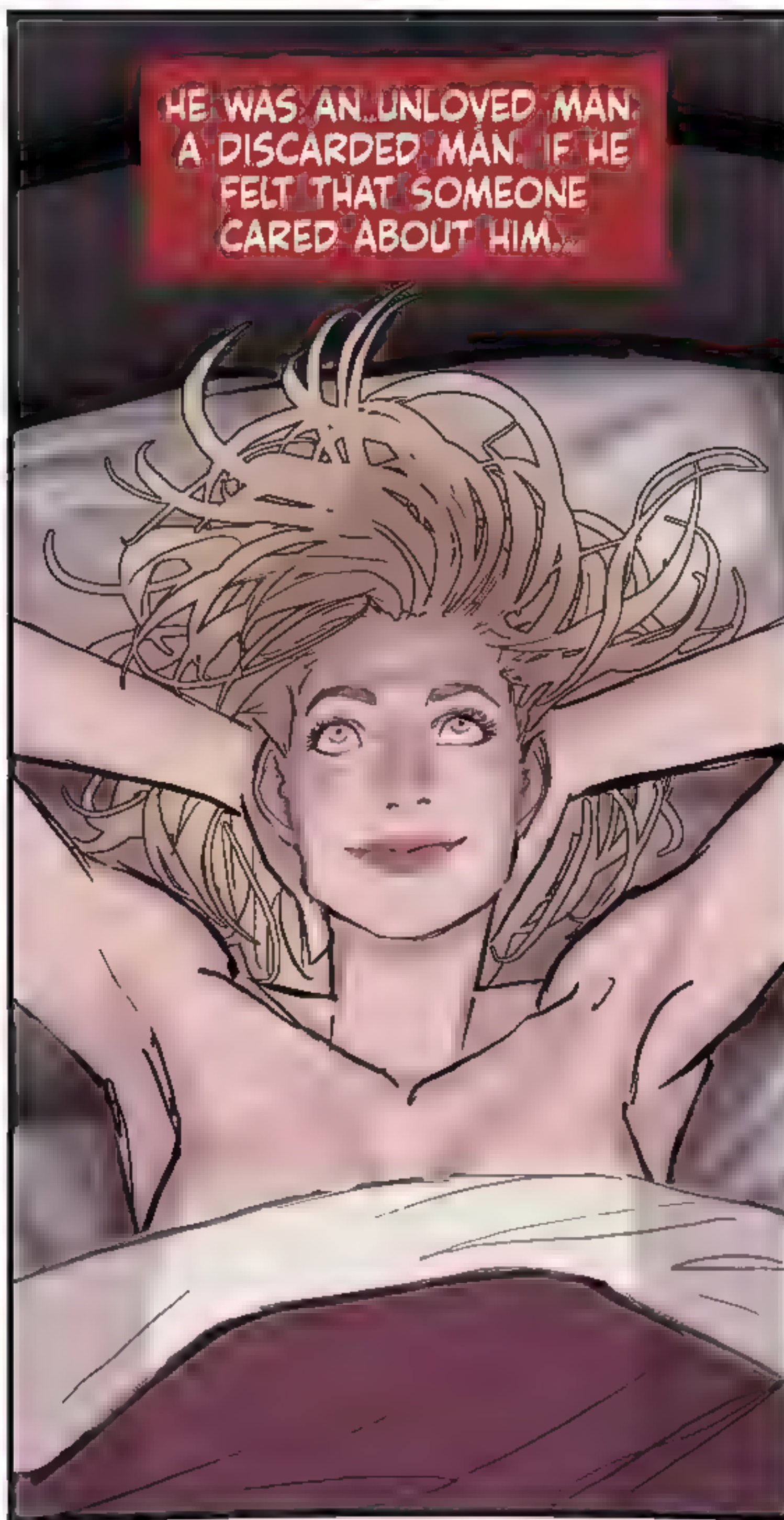
I SMILED IN MY BED LATER THAT NIGHT... MY MIND SWIMMING IN THE AFTERMATH OF IT ALL, FULL OF IDEAS, FULL OF PLANS...



FULL OF HOPE. I COULD DO IT! I WOULD BE THE ONE WHO SAVED HIM. I WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD.



IT WAS AN EGOTISTICAL, SELFISH THOUGHT, BUT I WAS FINE WITH THAT. I MEAN, LET'S FACE IT, SLEEPING WITH MY PATIENT MADE ME RELINQUISH THE MORAL HIGH GROUND, SO THIS WAS THE SECOND-HIGHEST PEAK I COULD CLIMB.



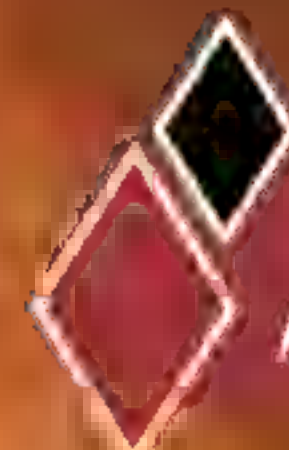
HE WAS AN UNLOVED MAN. A DISCARDED MAN. IF HE FELT THAT SOMEONE CARED ABOUT HIM...



WELL, HE WOULD HAVE A *REASON* TO... WHAT WAS IT I SAID? CLIMB OUT OF THE ABYSS? YEAH... ALL HE HAD TO DO WAS REACH OUT AND GRAB MY HAND.



AND IN MY DREAMS, HE DID JUST THAT.



IT FELT RIGHT.
ALMOST PROPHETIC.

DELUSIONAL THOUGH
IT WAS IN THE END, I
TRULY BELIEVED IT.

FIRST, I WOULD
SAVE HIM...

THEN I WOULD SAVE
THIS CITY OF MONSTERS.

WHAT A WONDERFUL
DREAM IT WAS...

BUT UNFORTUNATELY THAT DREAM WAS ABOUT TO END.

IT HAD BEEN FIVE MONTHS SINCE I FIRST MET HARVEY DENT...

...AND LIKE I SAID, FIVE MONTHS LATER WE'D BOTH BECOME *MURDERERS*.

WELL, I GUESS THIS IS IT.
YOU KNOW, BACK IN MY EARLY CAMPAIGNING DAYS, I USED TO SAY, "JUSTICE IS BLINDFOLDED, WITH ONE HAND TIED BEHIND HER BACK, BUT I'LL MAKE SURE SHE CAN AT LEAST THROW A MEAN RIGHT HOOK."

IT WAS A JOKE. BUT THE TRUTH IS, IN ORDER FOR GOTHAM TO BECOME A CITY OF *LAW AND ORDER*, A RIGHT HOOK IS NOT ENOUGH. WE NEED TO PUT *THE SWORD* BACK IN JUSTICE'S HANDS.

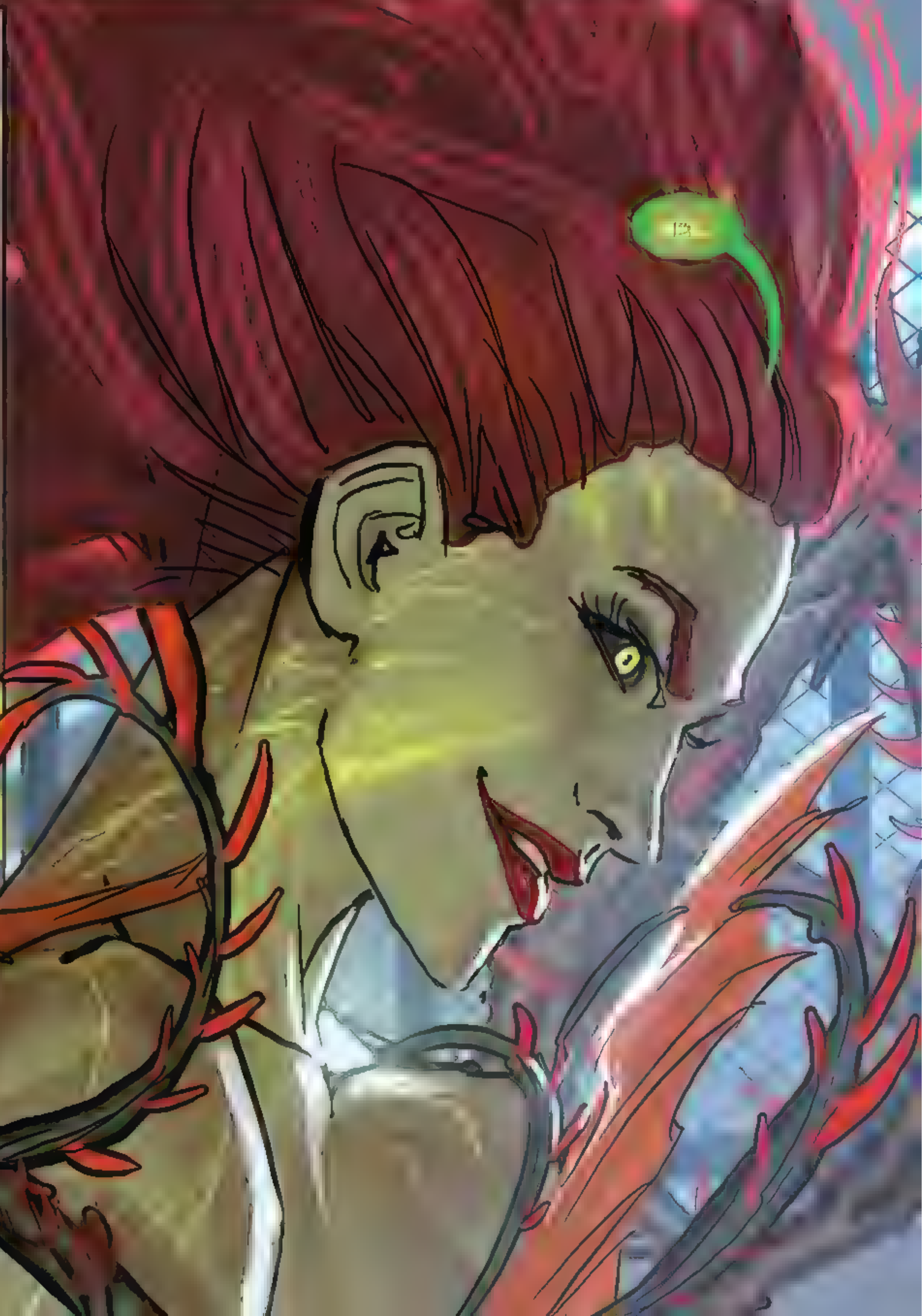
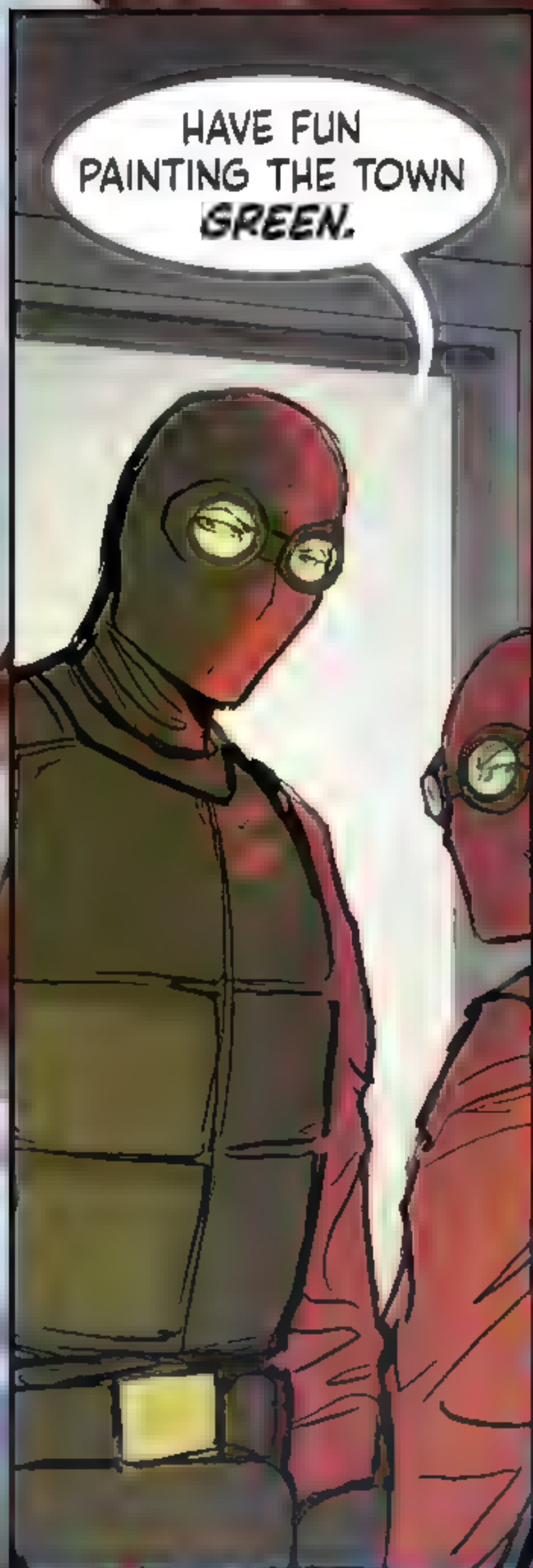
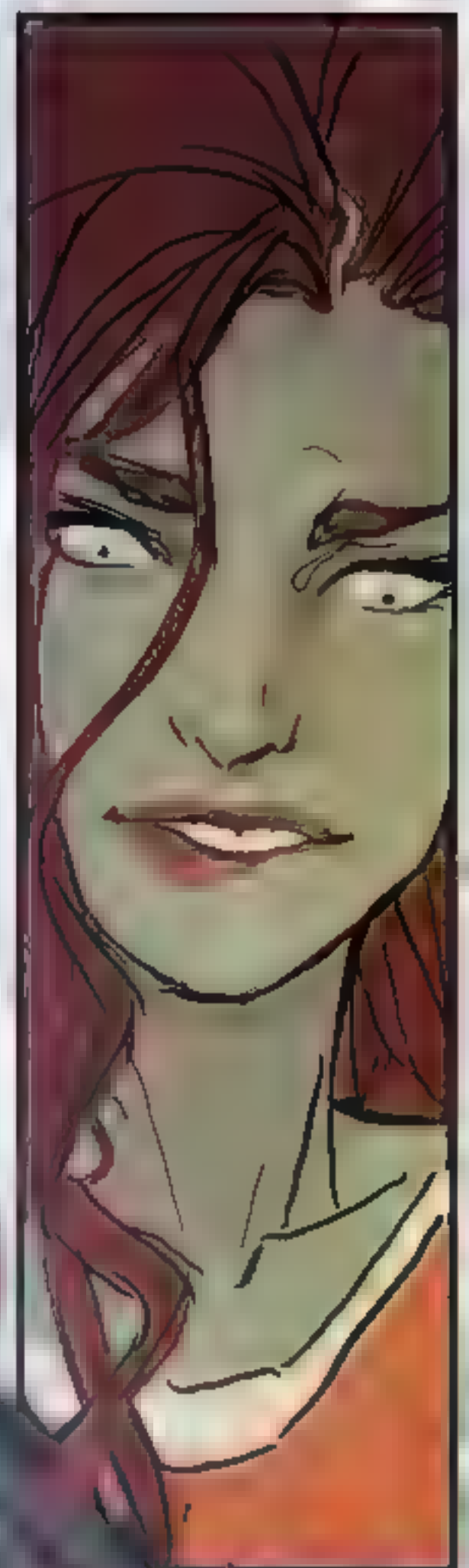
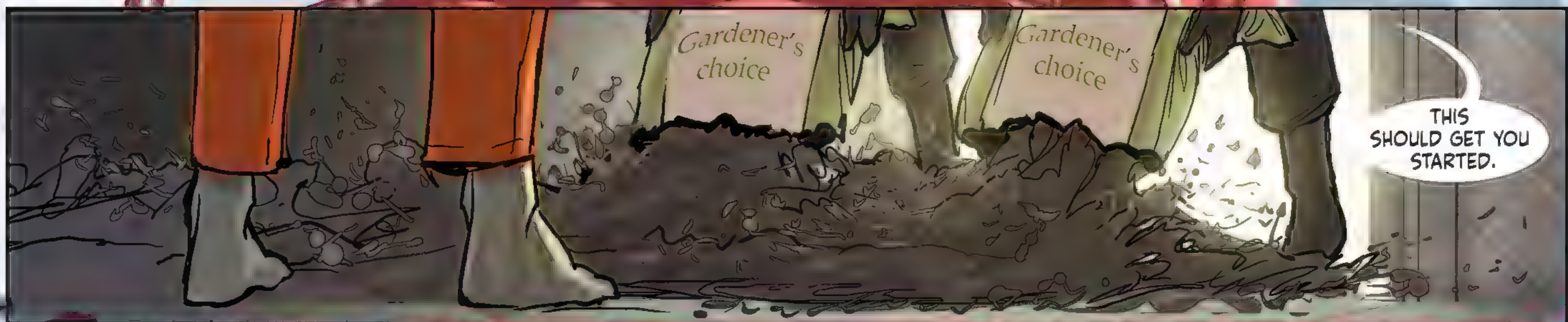
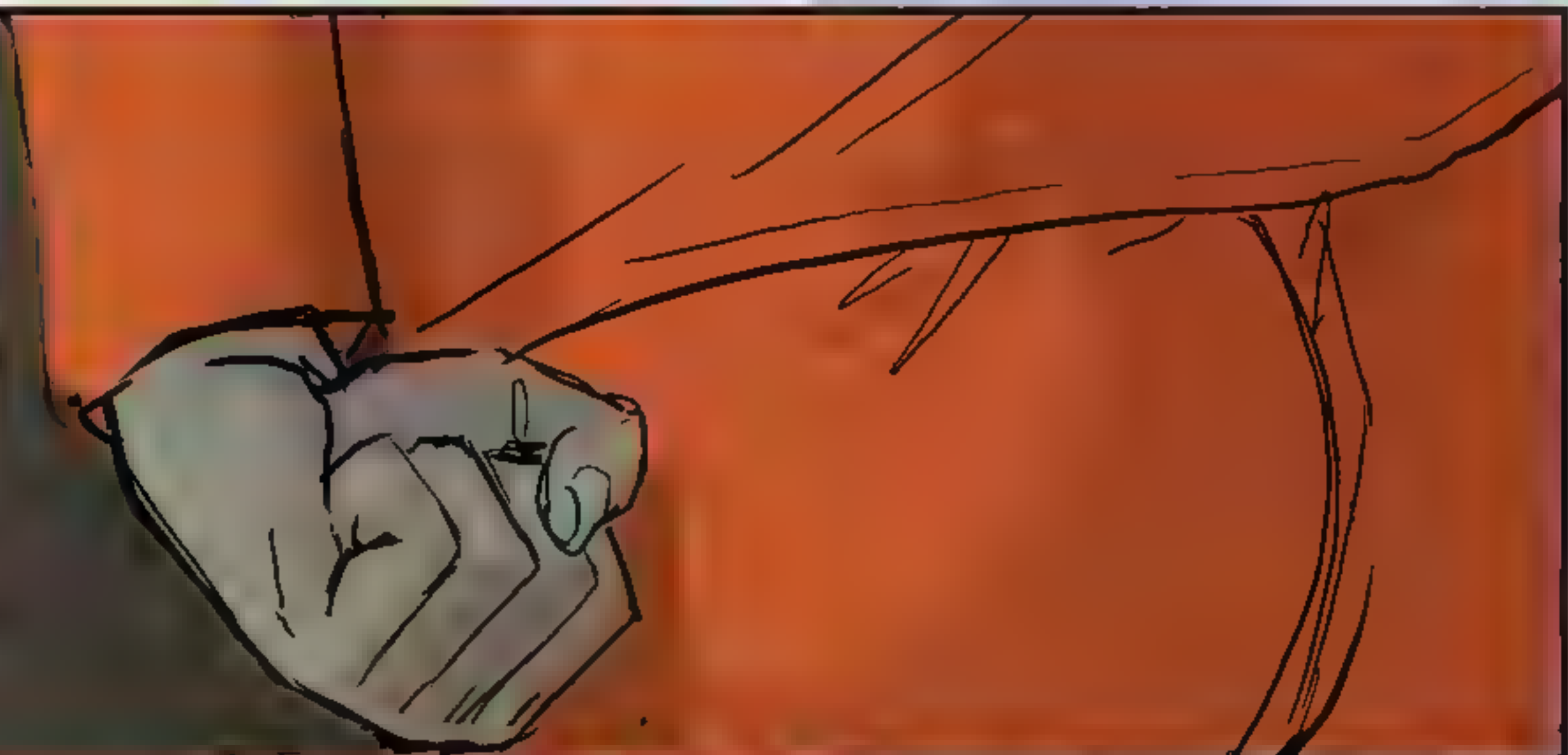
AND MAKE NO MISTAKE, *THAT* IS OUR PURPOSE HERE TONIGHT.

WHAT WE DO HERE, WE DO FOR THE *FUTURE* OF GOTHAM.

WE WILL UNLEASH HORRORS UPON THE CITY AND THEY *WILL* SEE, THEY WILL *REALIZE* THAT THE *ONLY* WAY TO STOP THIS MADNESS IS TO DO WHAT *NEEDS* TO BE DONE.

EXECUTIONERS! DO YOUR DUTY!

AND IF BLOOD *NEED* BE SPILLED...







NOW,
EVERYBODY...



RISE
AND SHINE...



GOTHAM
IS YOURS FOR THE
TAKING!



A *PAROLE*?
ALREADY? MUST
BE MY GOOD
BEHAVIOR!

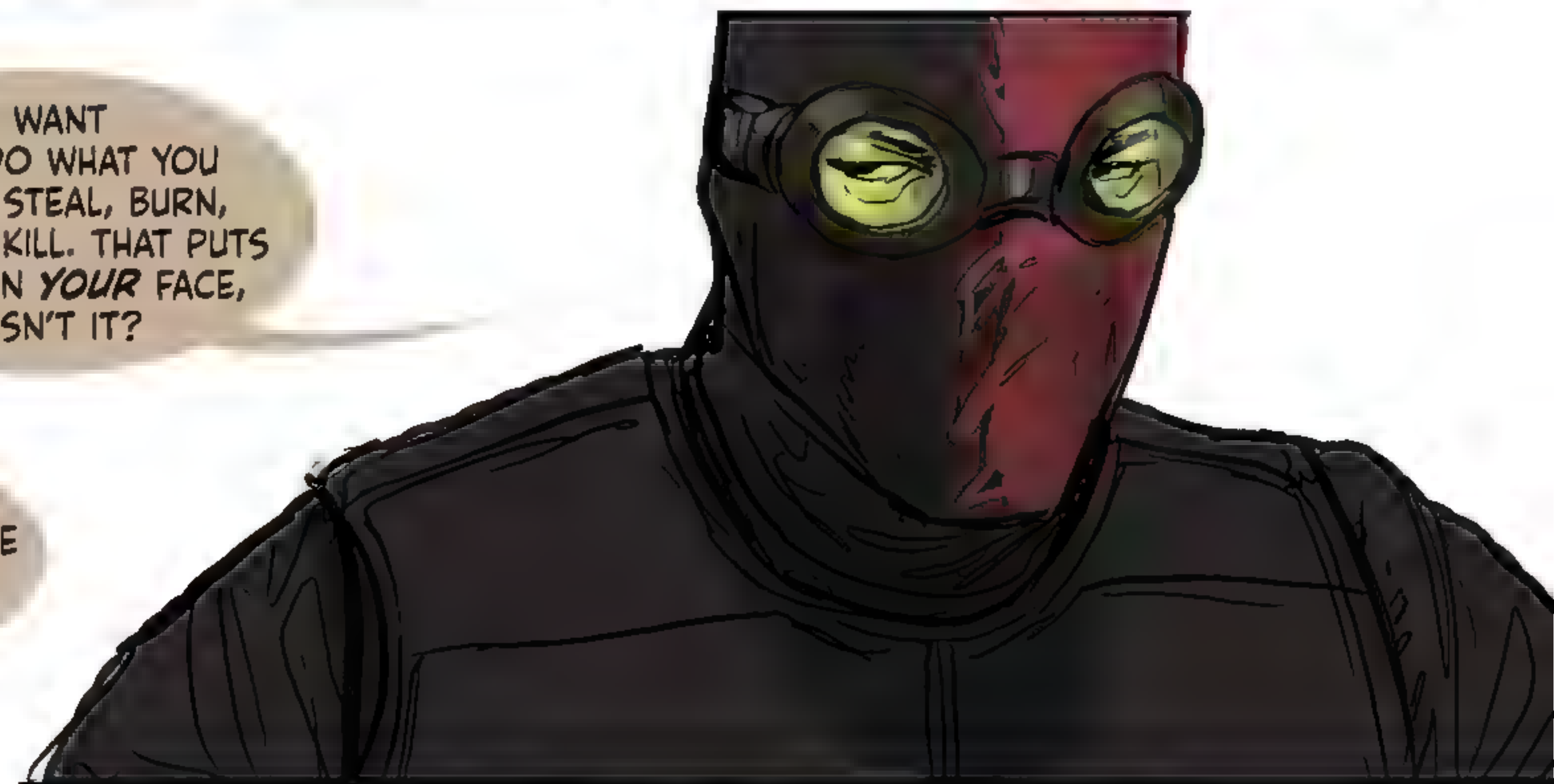
OH
NO, JUST THE
CONTRARY!

WHAT'S
THAT SUPPOSED
TO MEAN?



WE WANT
YOU TO DO WHAT YOU
DO BEST: STEAL, BURN,
MAIM, AND KILL. THAT PUTS
A SMILE ON *YOUR* FACE,
DOESN'T IT?

HEY, THAT
MAKES ME SOUND LIKE
SUCH A *ONE-NOTE*
VILLAIN!



MAYBE, BUT NO
ONE PLAYS THAT NOTE
BETTER.

HOW KIND!
BUT WHAT'S IN IT FOR
YOU? I'VE READ THE PAPERS,
AREN'T YOU PEOPLE ALL
ABOUT *EXECUTING*
CRIMINALS?

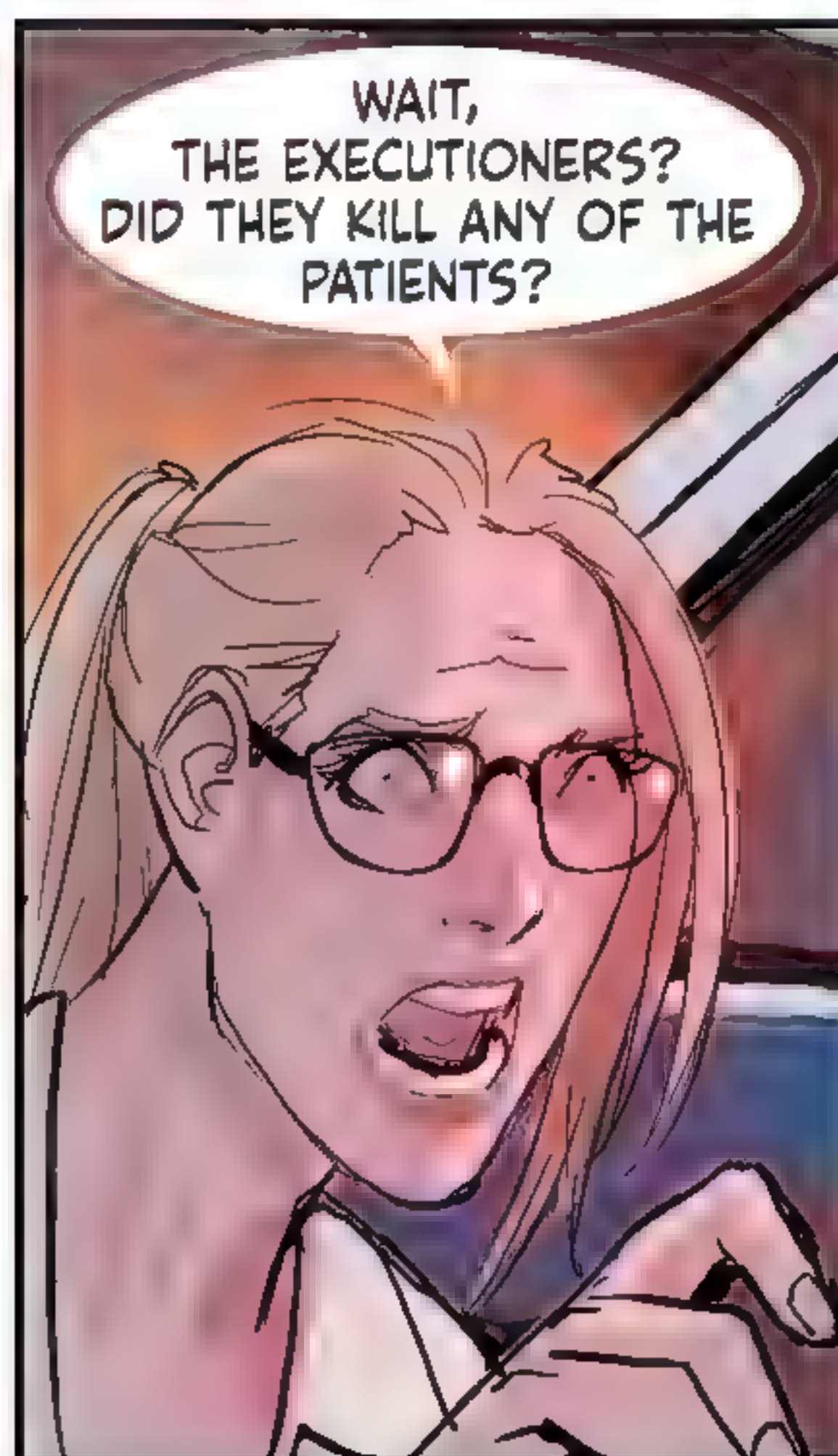
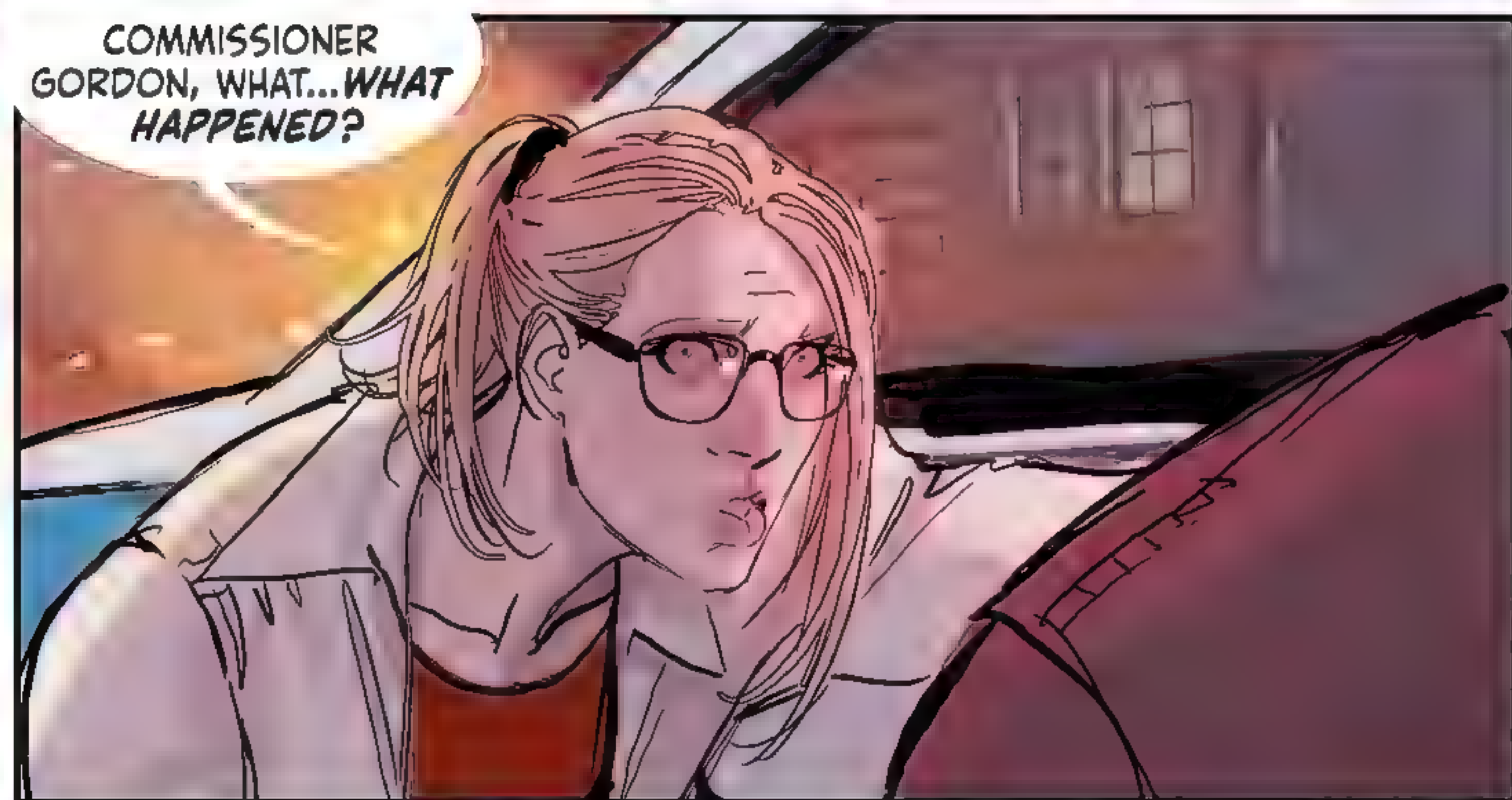
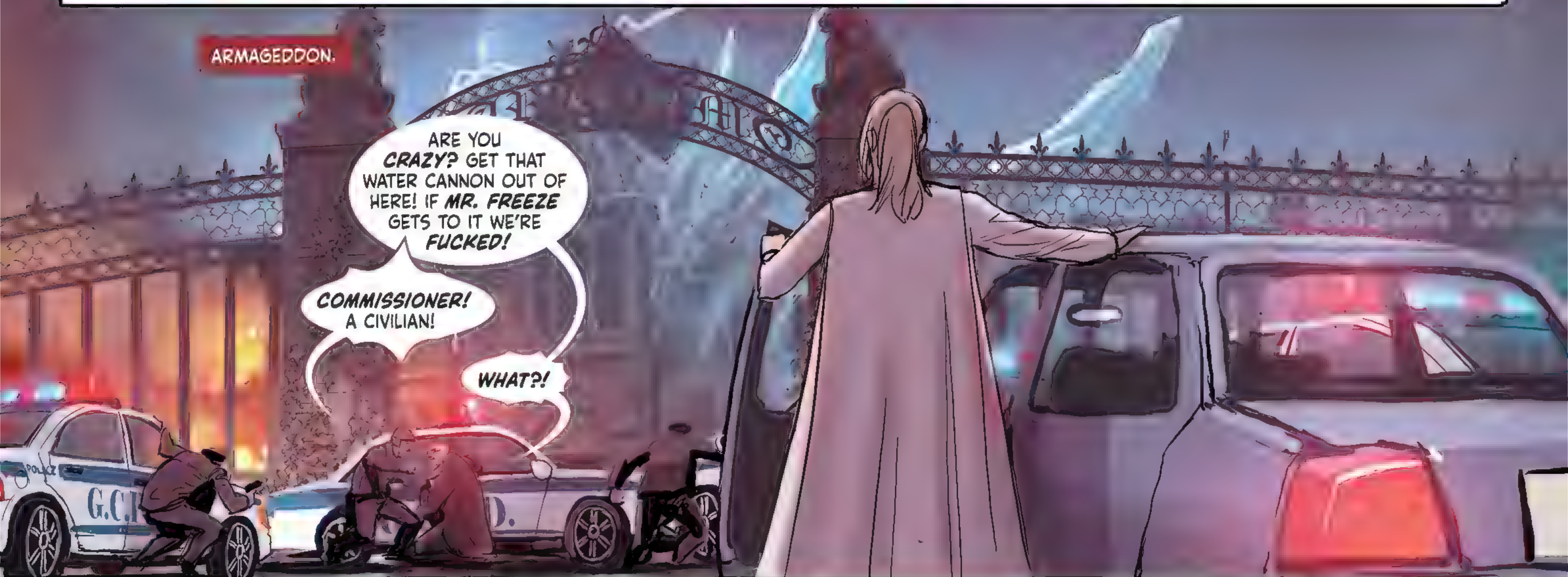
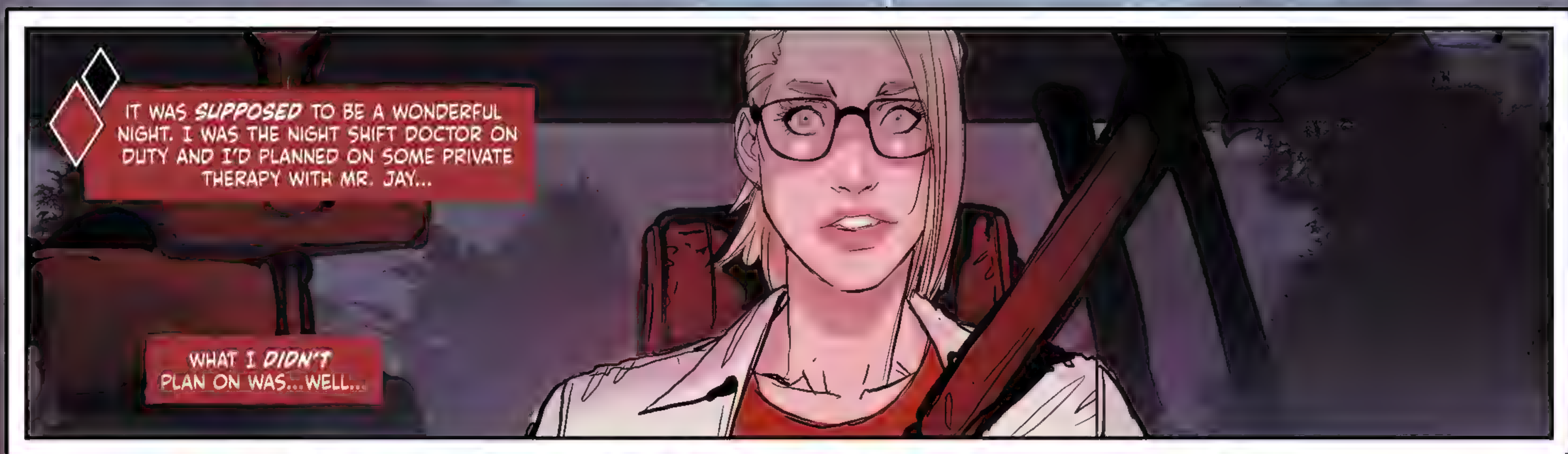
IT'S RIGHT
THERE IN THE
NAME...

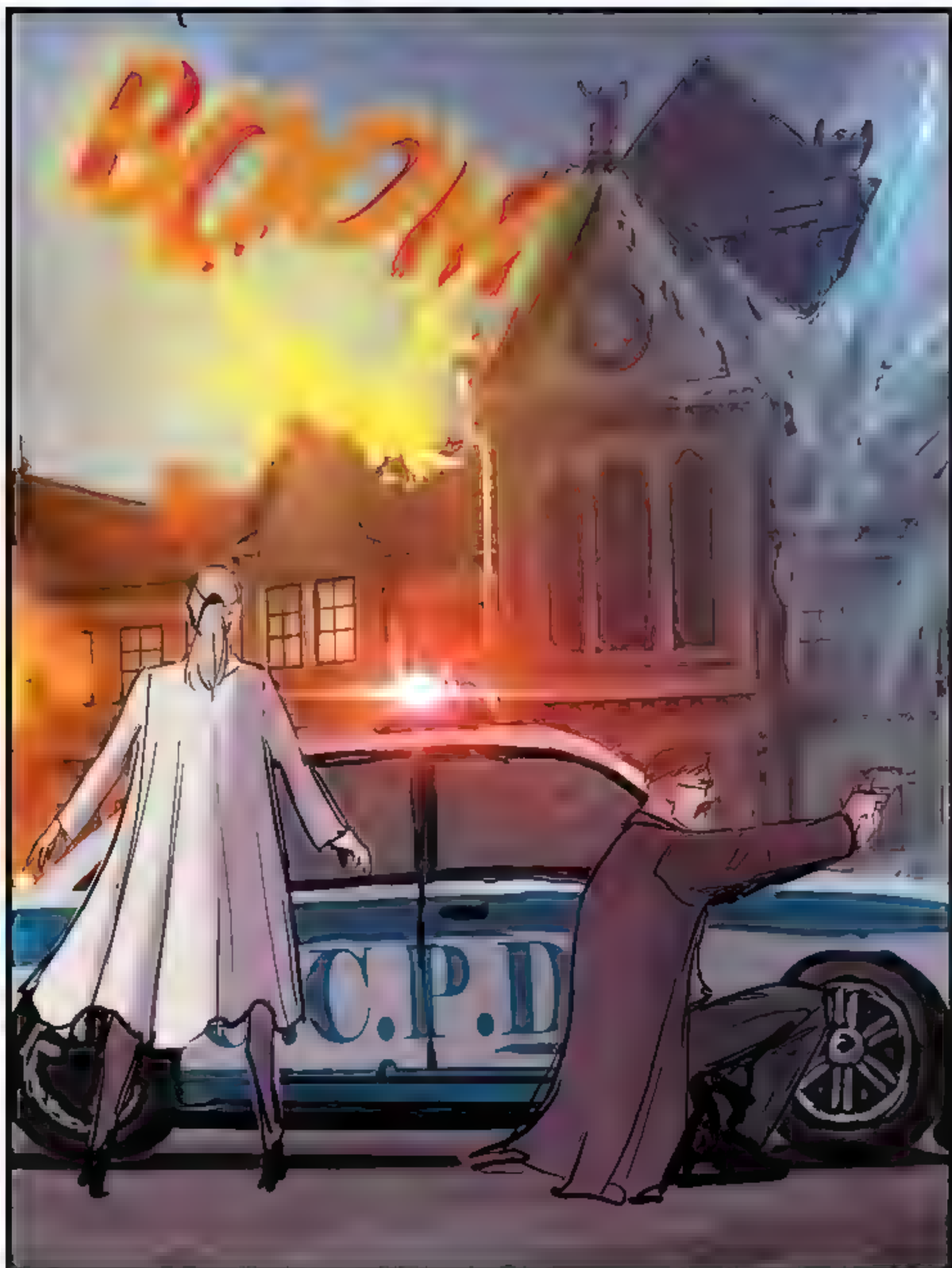
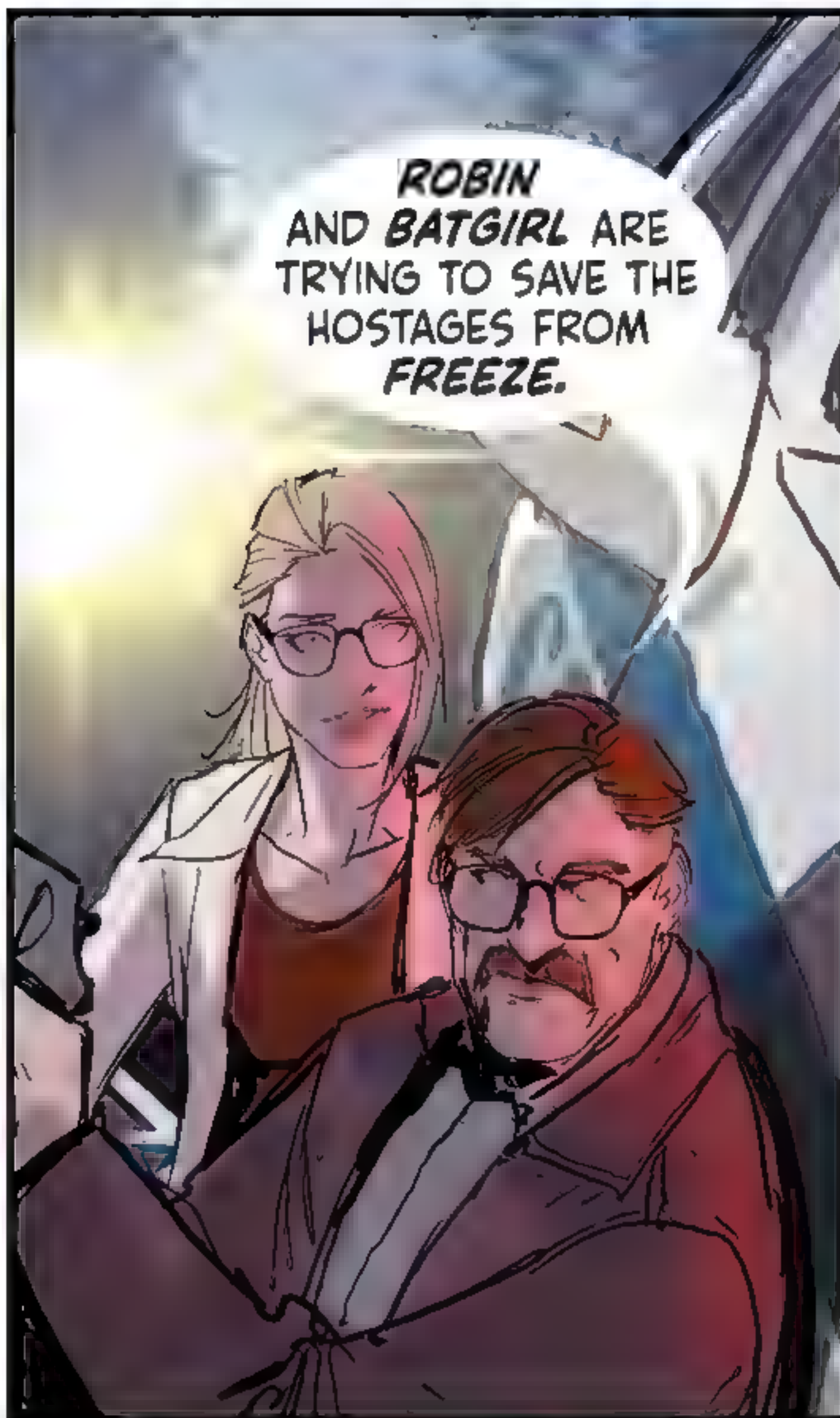


OUR
PURPOSE IS NONE
OF YOUR BUSINESS,
CLOWN.

NOW LEAVE!









LOVE MAKES YOU
DO CRAZY THINGS.

I WAS NEVER
BRAVE. NEVER HAD
A REASON TO BE...

THAT DAY, AS I RAN INTO
THE HAUNTING DARKNESS OF
AN ARKHAM CROWNED BY
FIRE...I *FOUND* MY REASON.



THE POWER WAS
OUT. IN A STRANGE
WAY, MAYBE IT WAS
FOR THE BEST.

GORDON SAID THE CAMERAS WERE
OPERATIONAL, WHICH MEANT THE
SECURITY STATION WAS STILL RUNNING
ON ITS OWN EMERGENCY GENERATOR.
I MADE MY WAY THERE, TRYING
TO FIND JAY.



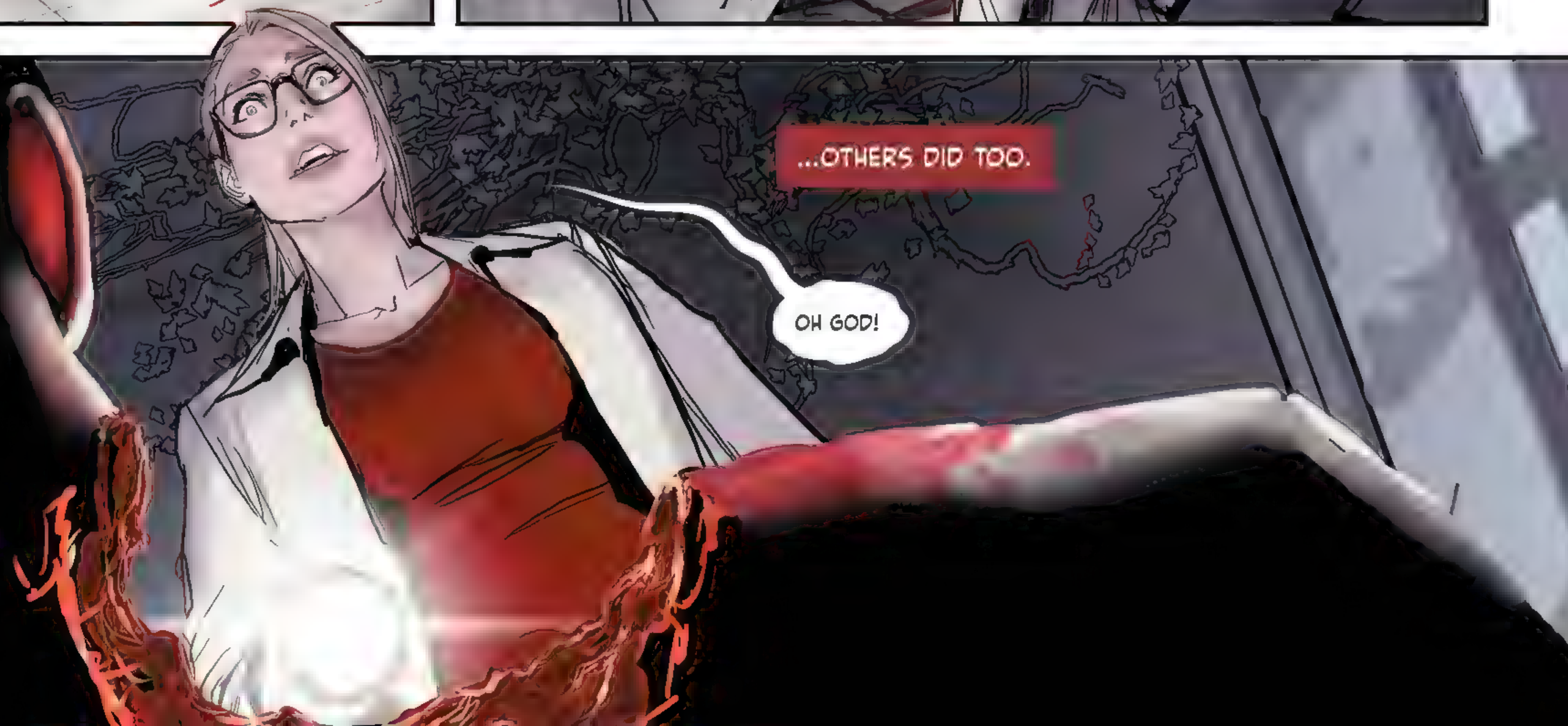
ON THE BRIGHT SIDE,
BY THEN I KNEW MY
WAY AROUND ARKHAM.

ON THE
DARKER SIDE...



...OTHERS DID TOO.

OH GOD!





YOU!
OH, I'VE
BEEN LOOKING
FOR YOU!

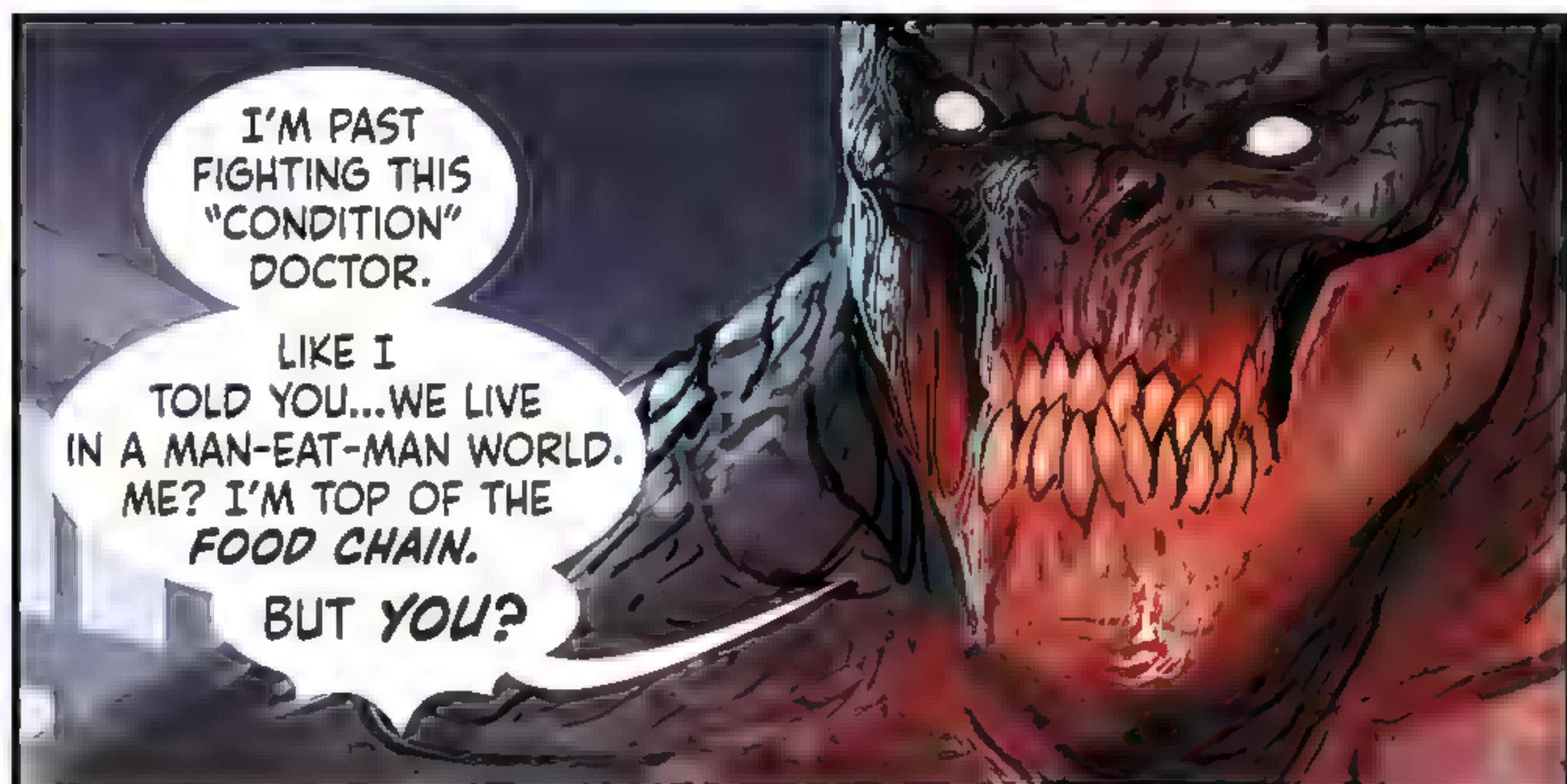
**THE
ANNOYING
DOCTOR.**

WAYLON, STOP! YOUR...
YOUR CONDITION **DOESN'T**
HAVE TO **DEFINE**
YOU!



I'M PAST
FIGHTING THIS
"CONDITION"
DOCTOR.

LIKE I
TOLD YOU...WE LIVE
IN A MAN-EAT-MAN WORLD.
ME? I'M TOP OF THE
FOOD CHAIN.
BUT YOU?



**YOU'RE
CHUM!**

AAAH!



WAH!



NO!

THAT'S
ENOUGH
WAYLON





HEY!
WHAT'S THE BIG
IDEA?!

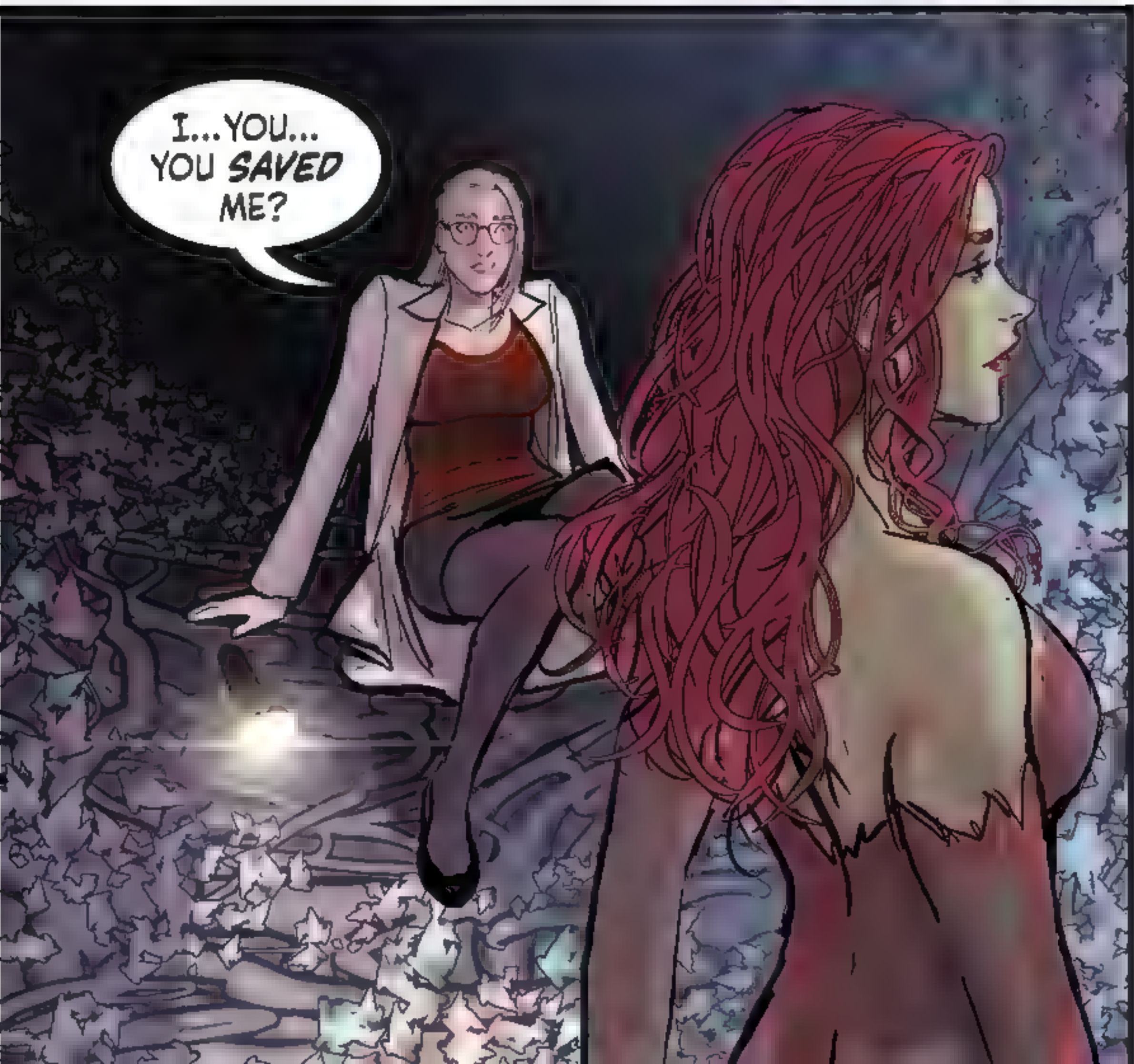
YOU'VE
EATEN PLENTY
TODAY!

NOW
LEAVE!

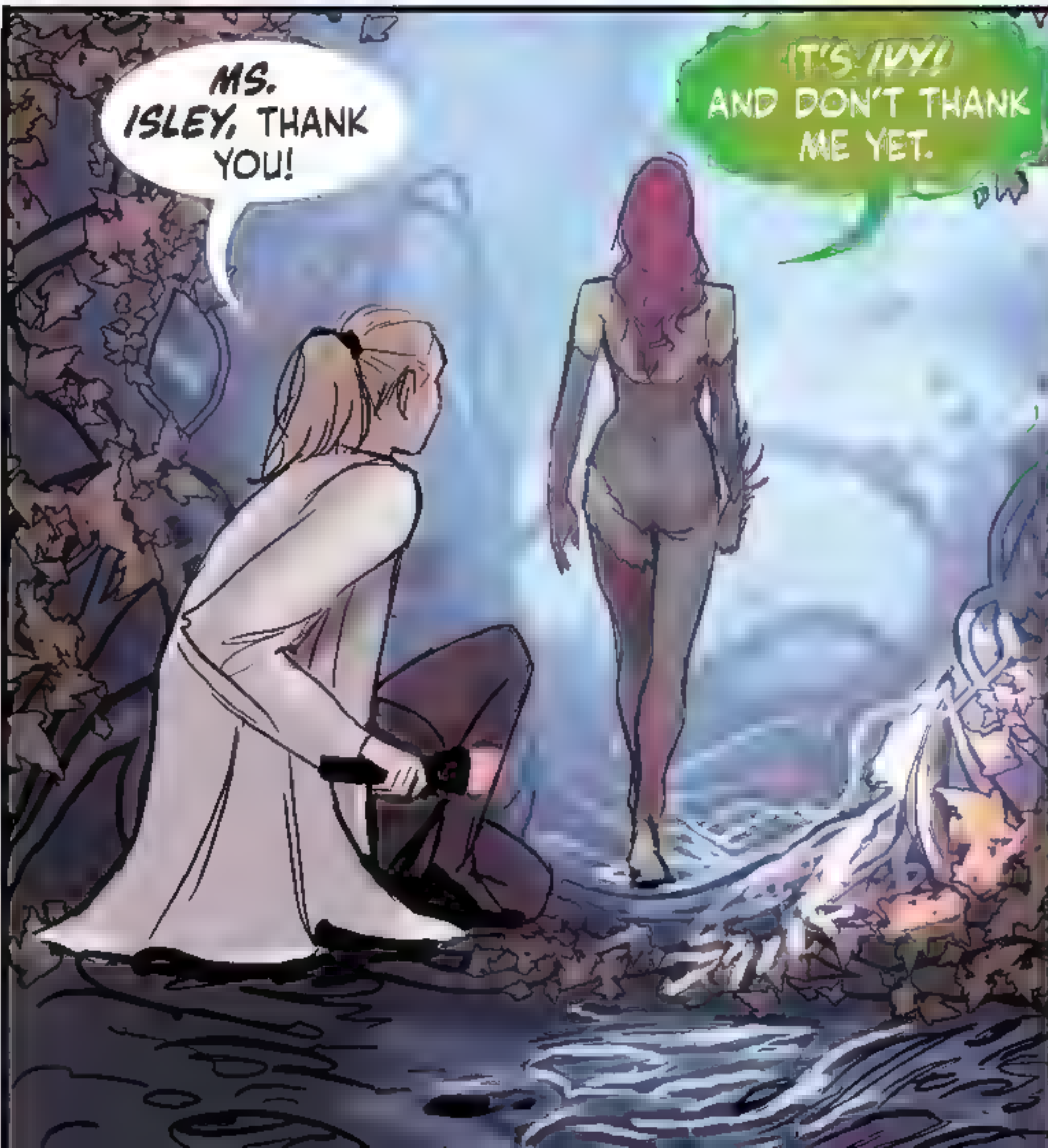


WHAT THE
HELL?

THAT'S...I
THINK THAT'S KILLER
CROC?



I...YOU...
YOU SAVED
ME?



MS.
ISLEY, THANK
YOU!

IT'S IVY!
AND DON'T THANK
ME YET.



AFTER
ALL, YOU'RE ONLY
TRULY SAVED IF YOU
LEAVE THIS
PLACE.



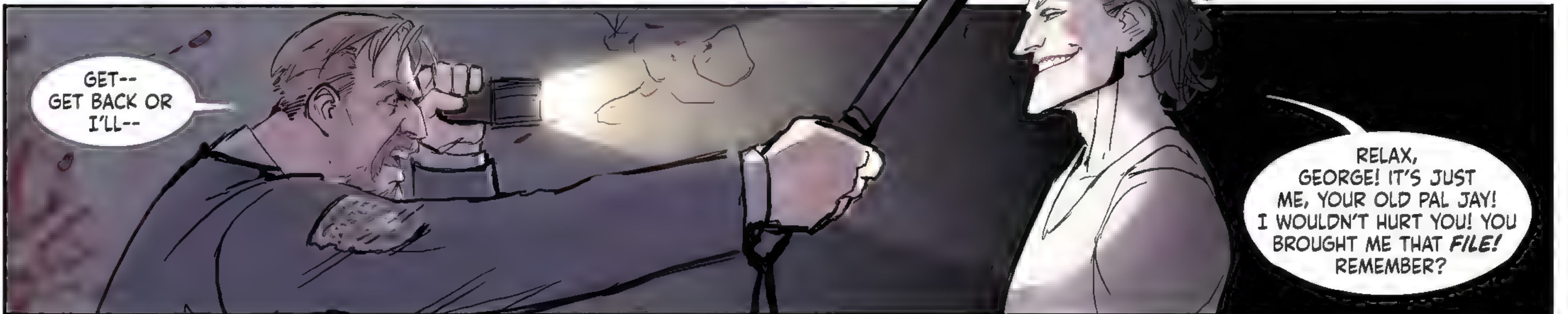
FUCK!

I GOTTA
FIND A WAY OUT
OF THIS FUCKING
PLACE...

I GOTTA
GET OUT!



HEYA,
GEORGE! HOW'S
LUCK TREATING
YA TODAY?



GET--
GET BACK OR
I'LL--

RELAX,
GEORGE! IT'S JUST
ME, YOUR OLD PAL JAY!
I WOULDN'T HURT YOU! YOU
BROUGHT ME THAT *FILE*!
REMEMBER?



Y-YEAH...I
HELPED YOU, SO
YOU'LL HELP
ME?

SURE!

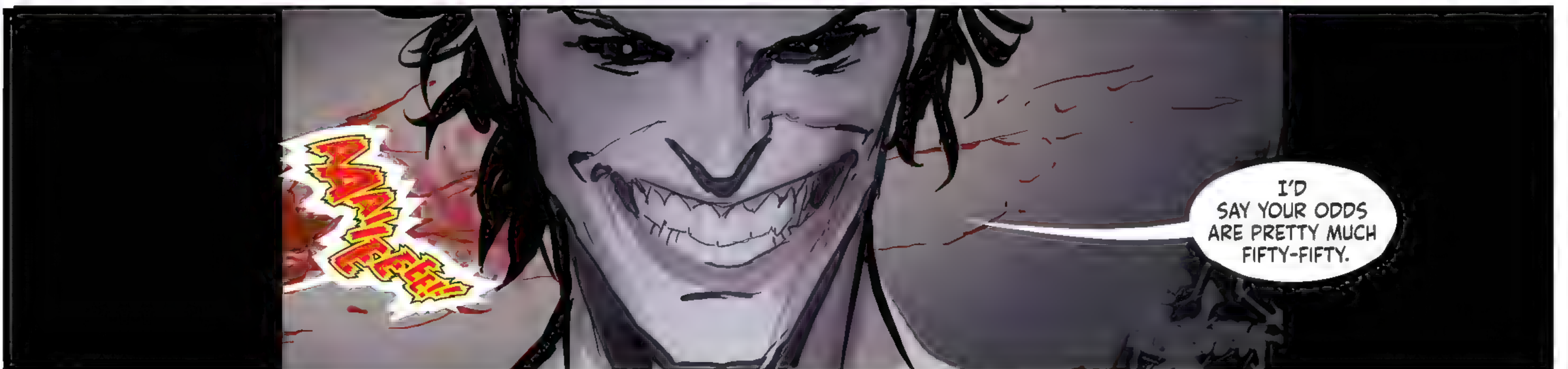


SEE, WHILE
THE MAIN EXITS ARE
BLOCKED, I HAPPEN TO
KNOW YOU CAN MAKE YOUR
WAY OUT OF THE ASYLUM
THROUGH THE BOILER
ROOM!

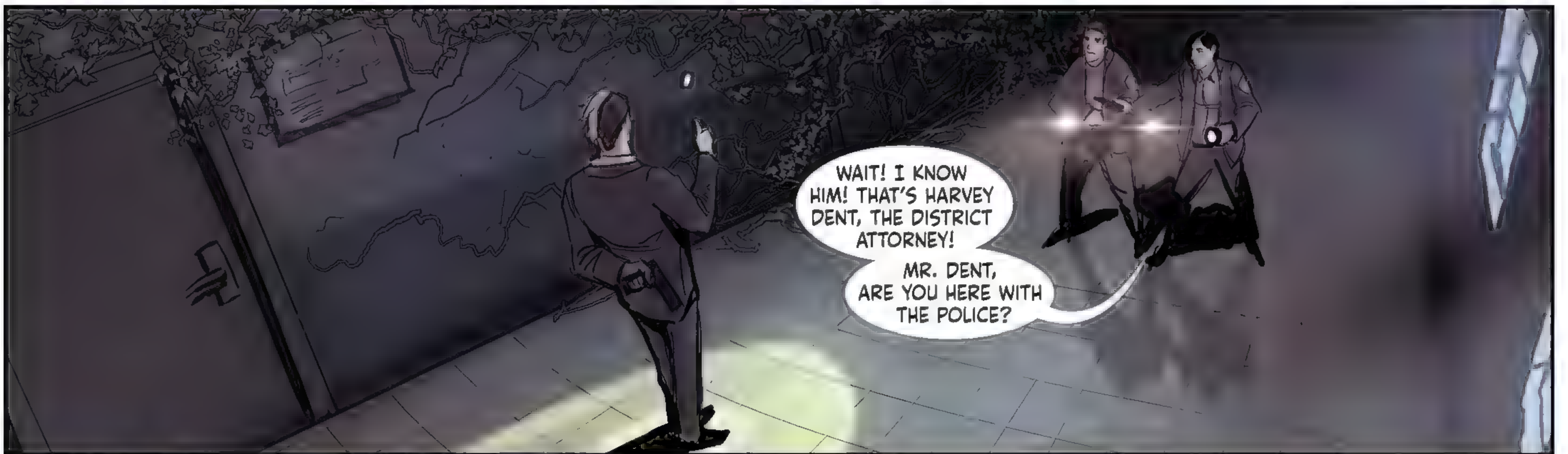


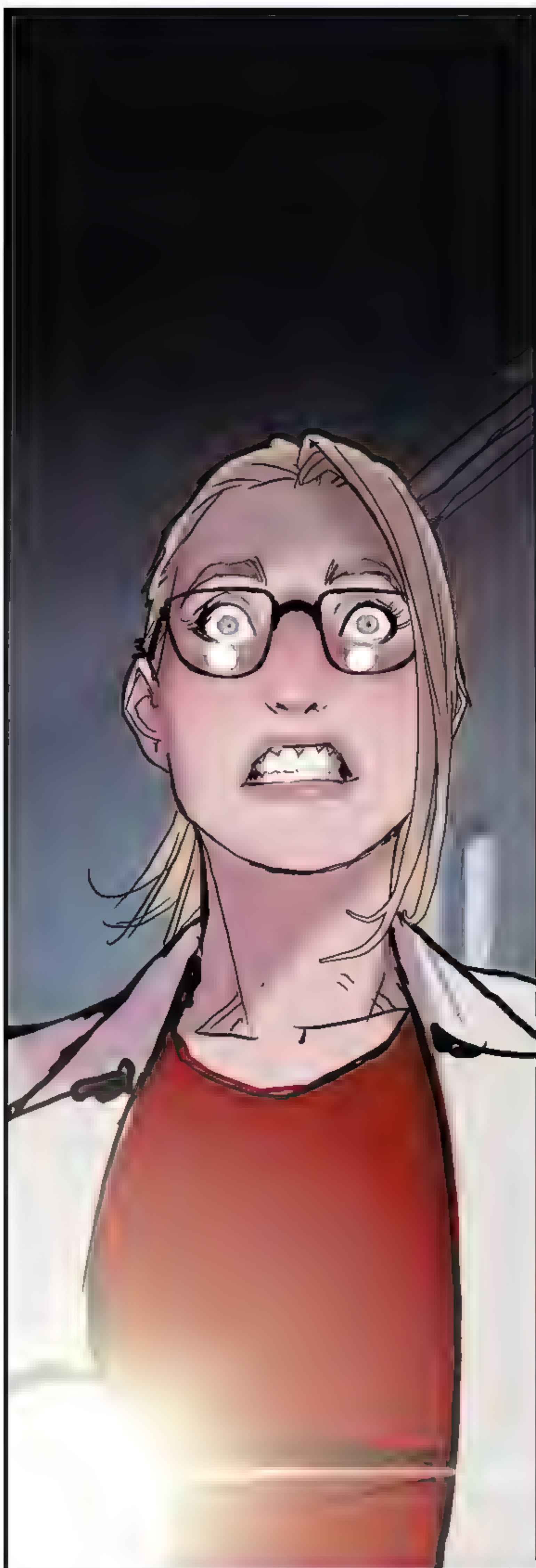
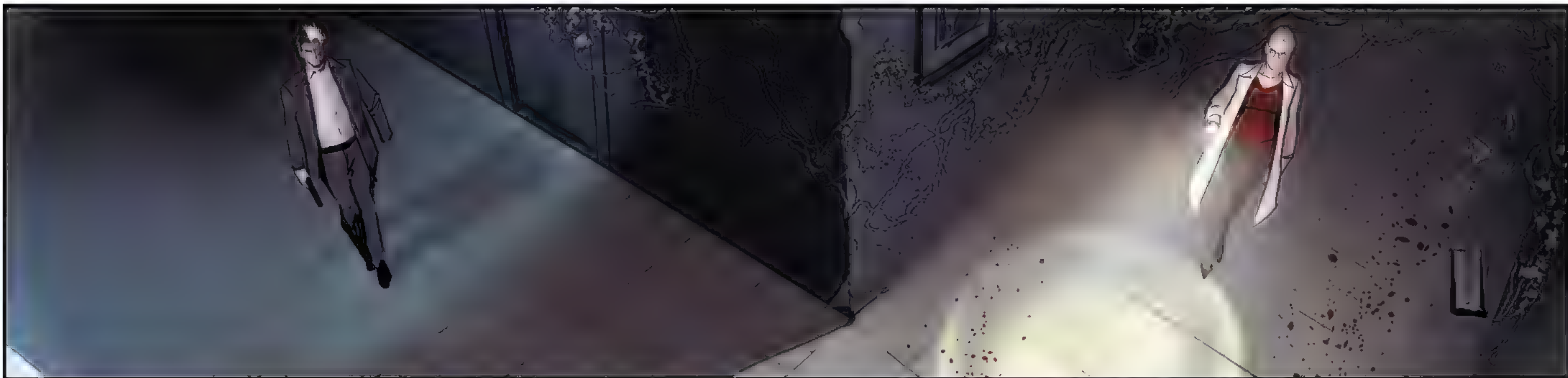
LEFT OR
RIGHT CORRIDOR, THEY
BOTH HAVE STAIRCASES THAT
LEAD DOWN THERE.

THING IS,
I'M PRETTY SURE I
HEARD *MR. ZSASZ* DOING HIS
THING IN ONE OF THEM, SO
HONESTLY YOU GOTTA JUST
PICK ONE AND
PRAY!



I'D
SAY YOUR ODDS
ARE PRETTY MUCH
FIFTY-FIFTY.







NIGHT SHIFT?

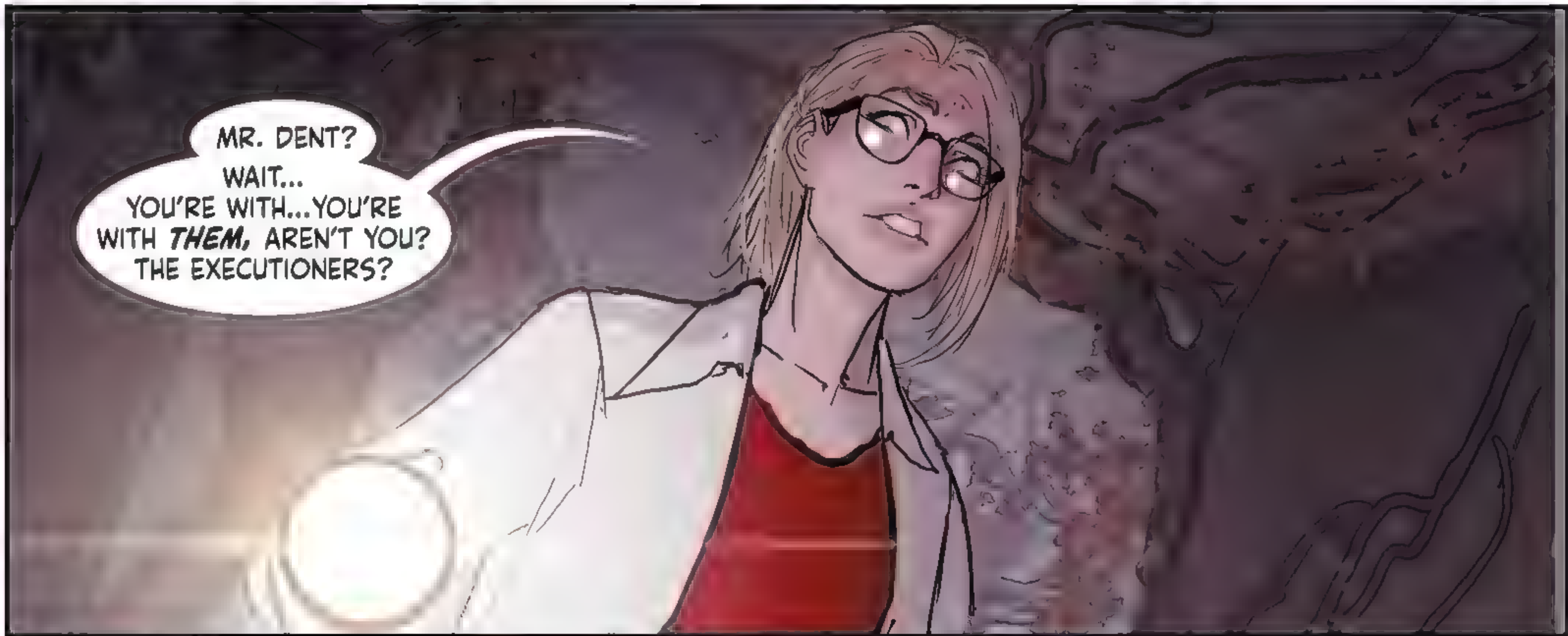
I...UH,
I'M GETTING
MY *FILES*...
MY...UM--

RESEARCH?

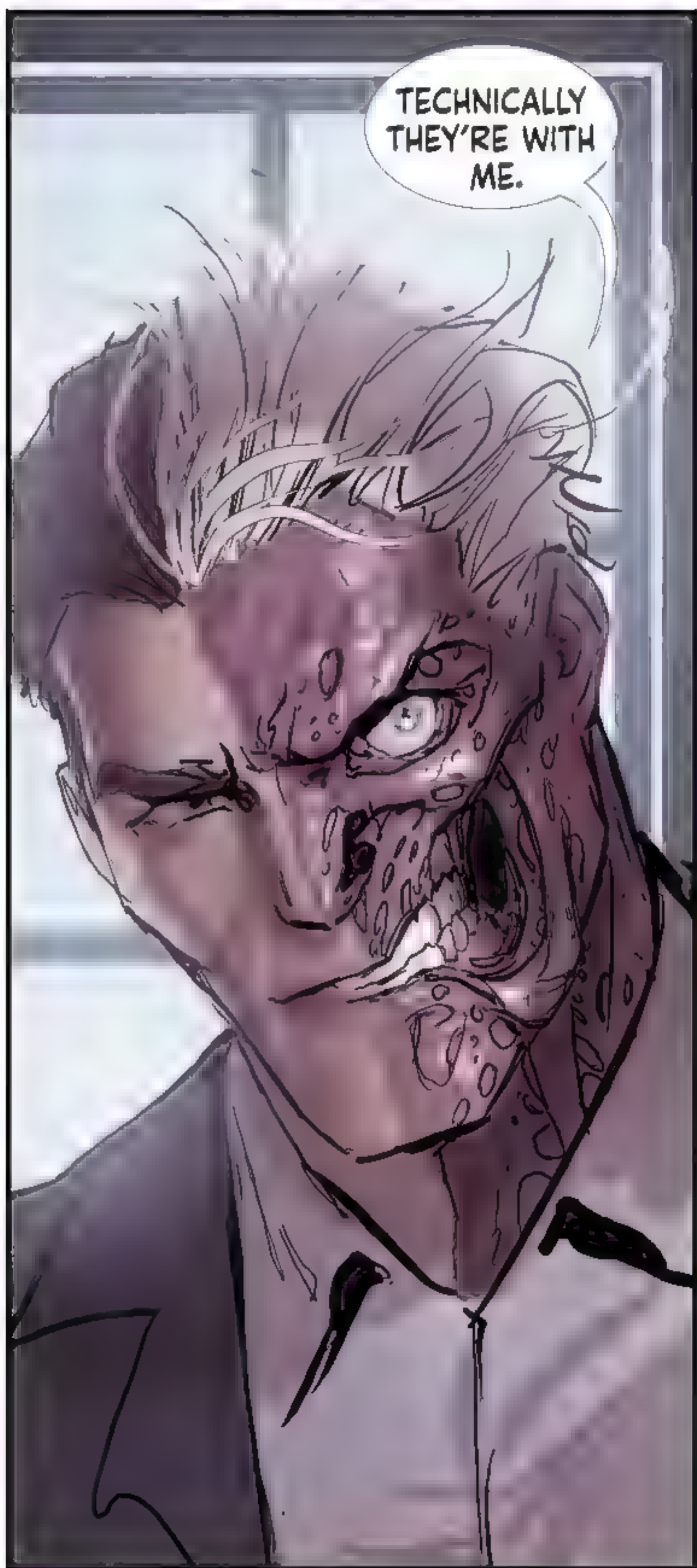
Y-YEAH.
AND I...I SHOULD
REALLY *HURRY*
SO--



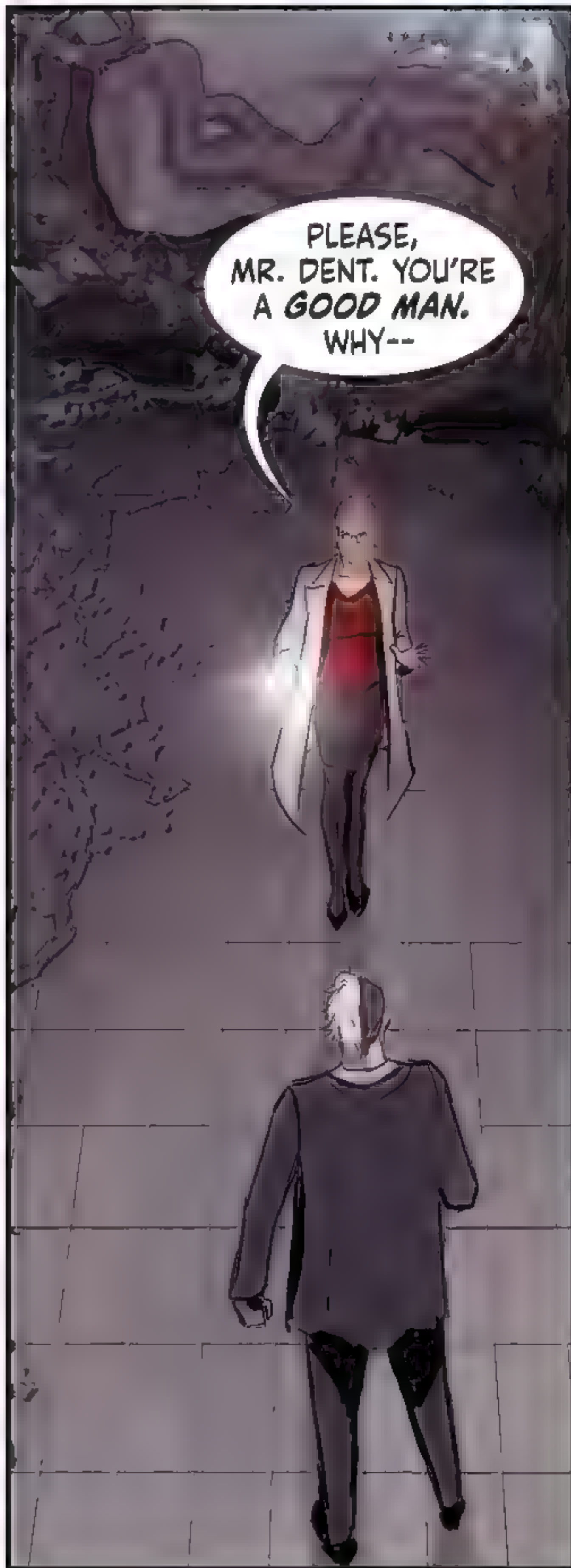
WHAT'S THE
RUSH?



MR. DENT?
WAIT...
YOU'RE WITH...YOU'RE
WITH *THEM*, AREN'T YOU?
THE EXECUTIONERS?



TECHNICALLY
THEY'RE WITH
ME.



PLEASE,
MR. DENT. YOU'RE
A *GOOD MAN*.
WHY--

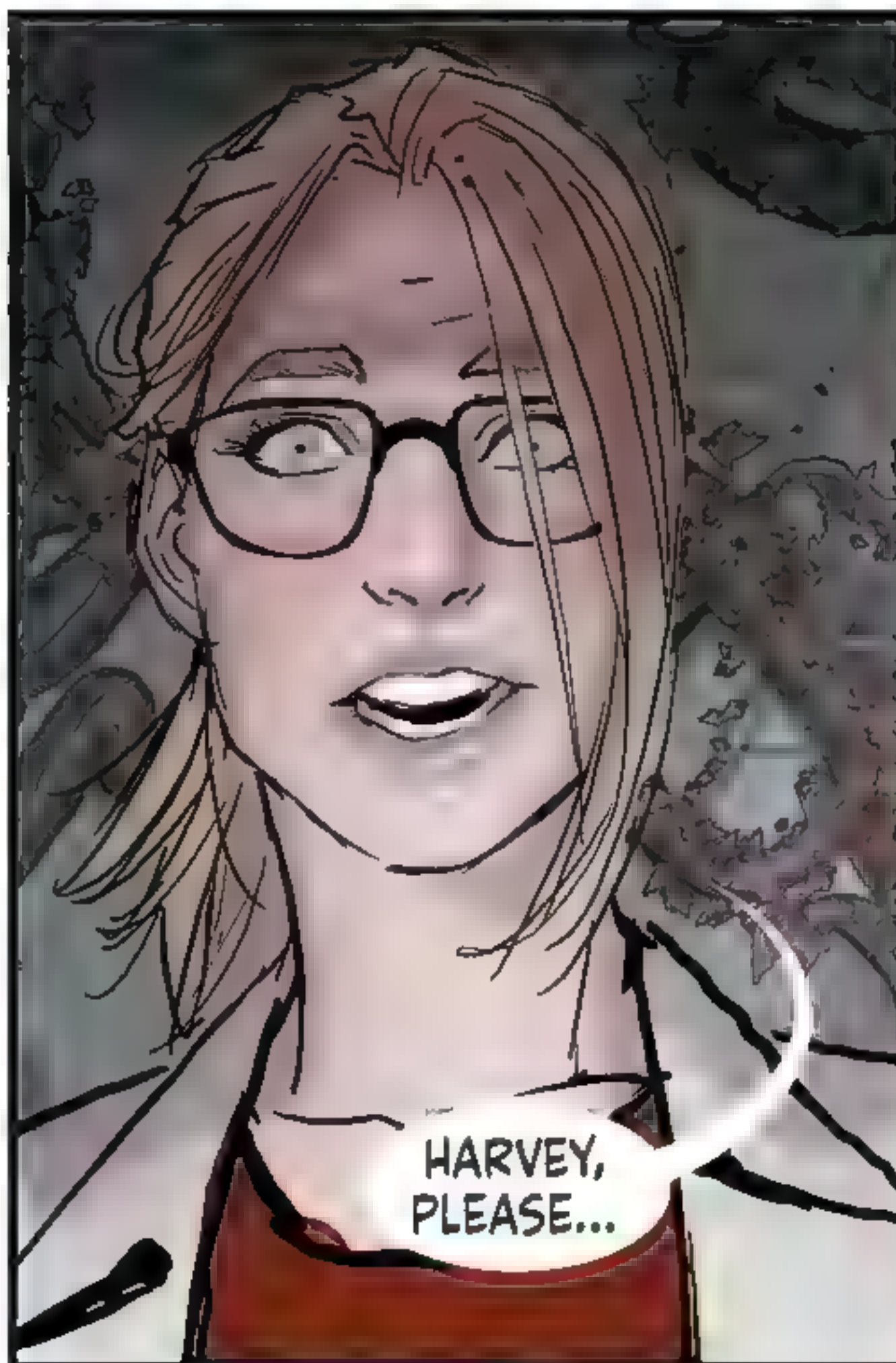


WELL, ISN'T
THAT THE BIG
QUESTION?

WHY DO
GOOD PEOPLE JUST
SNAP? I BELIEVE YOU
HAD A *THEORY* ON
THAT?



WHAT WAS IT?
PEOPLE IN PROLONGED
STRESSFUL SITUATIONS
MIGHT PERMANENTLY LOSE
THE ABILITY TO FEEL
EMPATHY?
SOMETHING
LIKE THAT?





TO THE POINT, HUH?

BUT IT DOESN'T LEAVE THIS ROOM.

O-O-KAY.

IT WAS FIVE YEARS AGO.



ONCE AGAIN, THE JOKER HAD ESCAPED FROM ARKHAM-- ONLY TO KILL **TWELVE** PEOPLE IN A GAS ATTACK.



I FOUGHT WITH A JUDGE WHO KEPT SENDING JOKER BACK TO ARKHAM ON RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PEOPLE LIKE **YOU**, QUINZEL.

AND THE REAL KICKER IS, EVEN HE DIDN'T THINK THE JOKER BELONGED HERE.

THE JUDGE SENT HIM TO ARKHAM BECAUSE HE THOUGHT JOKER WOULD BE AN EVEN WORSE THREAT AT BLACKGATE!

THIS WAS THE **COWARDICE** OF OUR LEGAL SYSTEM AT ITS FINEST AND WE DESPISED IT!

...WE?



ME...

I WAS TIRED OF INNOCENT PEOPLE DYING BECAUSE THOSE OF US IN POWER LACKED THE COURAGE TO USE THE ONE THING THAT COULD PERMANENTLY PROTECT GOTHAM'S CITIZENS.

THE SWORD WE KEPT OUT OF THE HANDS OF JUSTICE.

DEATH.



THAT DAY I LOOKED AT ARKHAM IN THE DISTANCE AND THOUGHT, WHAT IF WE JUST RELEASED **ALL OF THEM?**

EVERY LAST BEAST CAGED WITHIN.

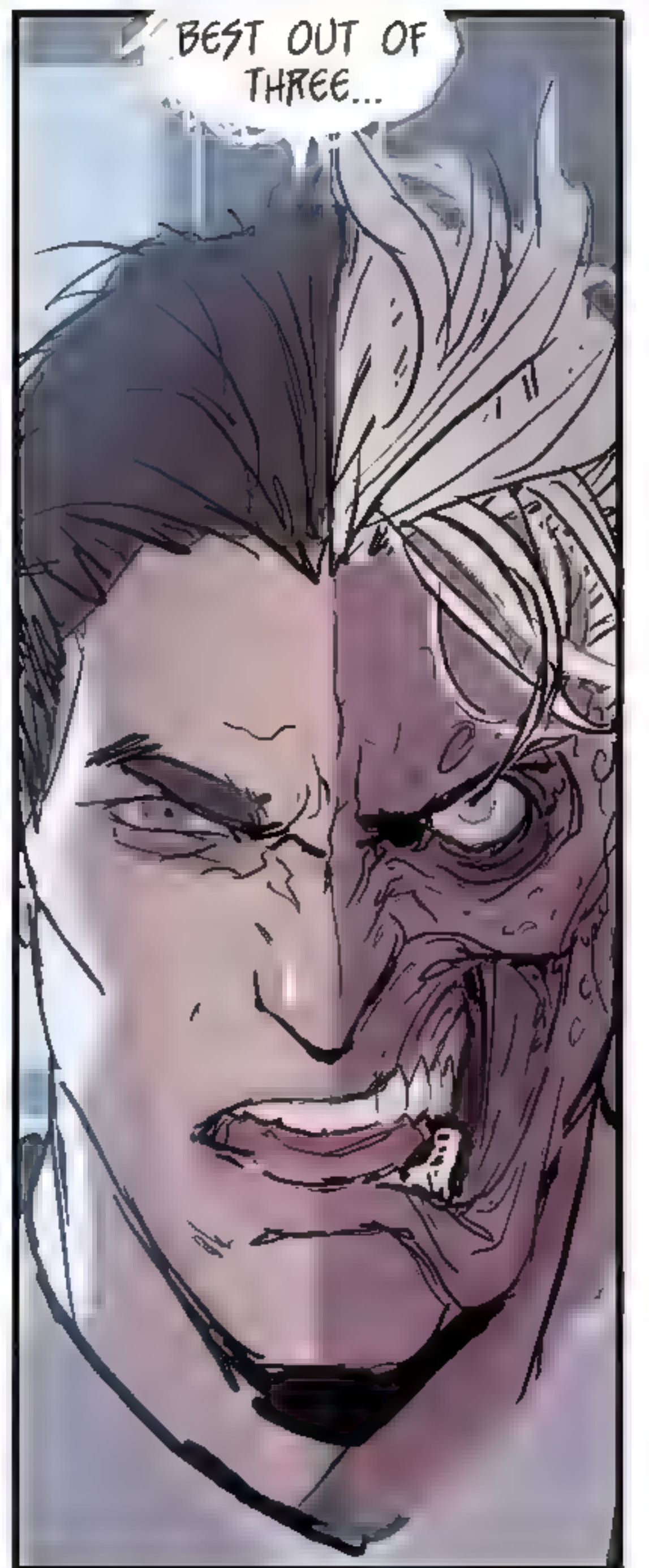
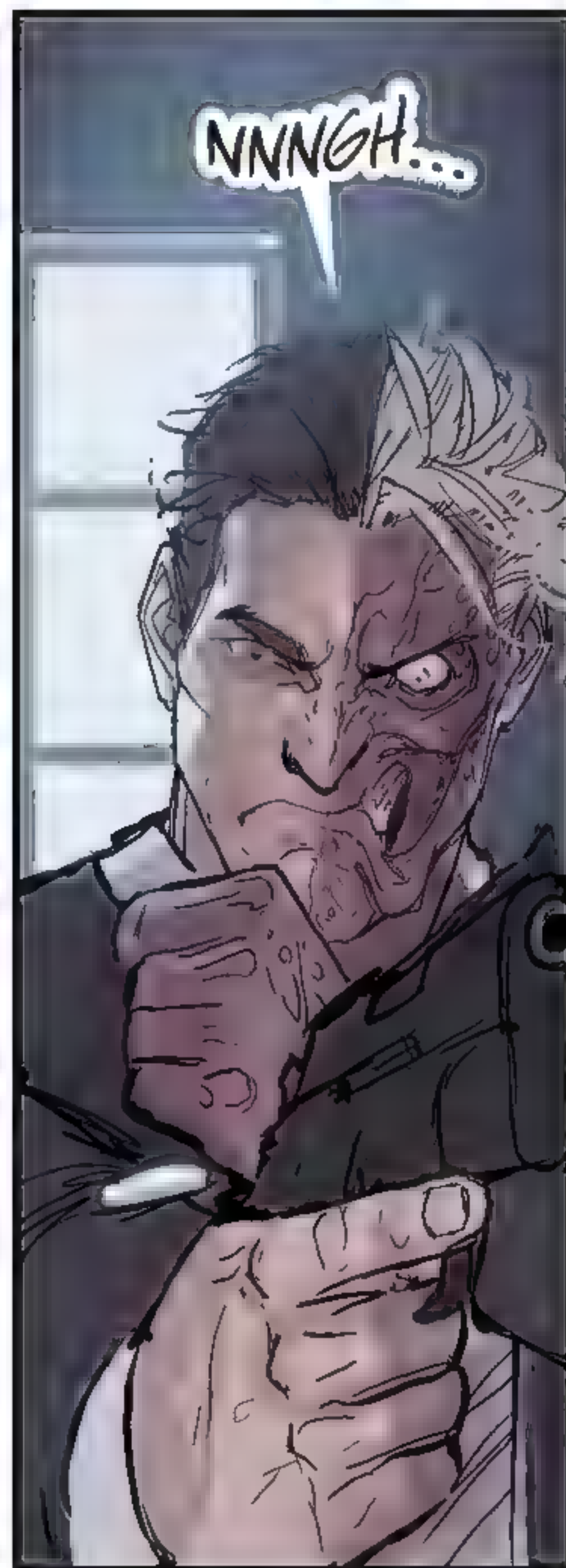
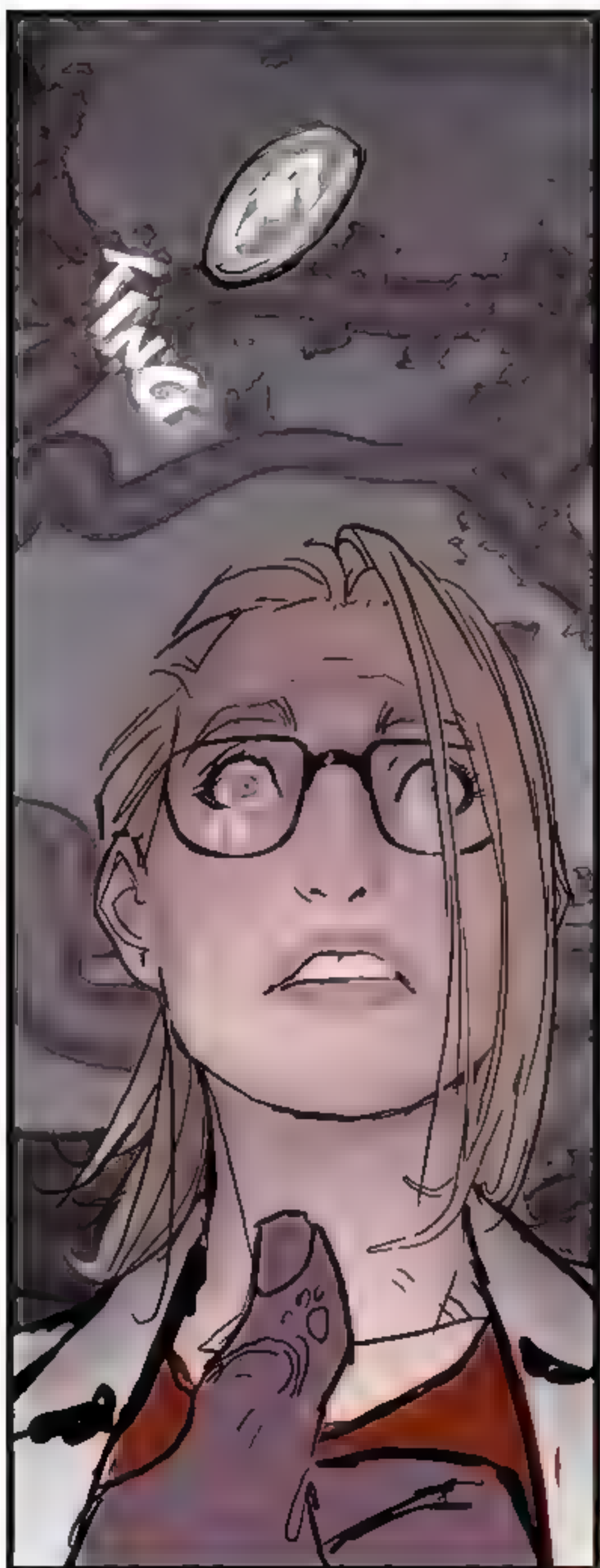
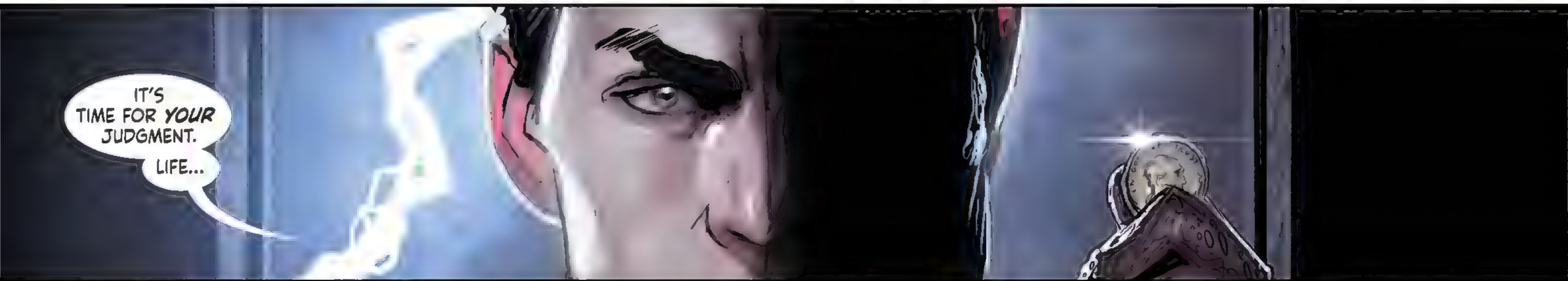
AND WHAT IF WE LET THEM RIP AND TEAR THROUGH THIS CURSED CITY UNTIL EVEN THE SOFTEST BLEEDING HEART WOULD FINALLY ADMIT THERE WAS NO **CURE** FOR EVIL.



WE DROPPED THAT IDEA. IT WAS WRONG. WE WERE EMBARRASSED OF THIS DARKNESS GROWING WITHIN US.

BUT NOW... WE SEE THINGS **CLEARLY.**







NOW *THAT'S* CHEATING!

JAY!
RUN, HE'S GOT A GUN!



NOW NOW!
DON'T THINK YOU'RE
Distracting me that
easily, Doc!

YOU'RE
CHEATING AS
WELL!

I THOUGHT *I*
WAS YOUR FAVORITE
HOMICIDAL
MANIAC!

AND HERE
I FIND YOU HAVING
A ONE-ON-ONE WITH
ANOTHER FREAK!
FOR SHAME!



BUT WAIT!



YOU
LOOK HALF
FAMILIAR!



NO WAY!
HARVEY DENT,
AS I LIVE AND
BREATHE!



NOT FOR LONG.

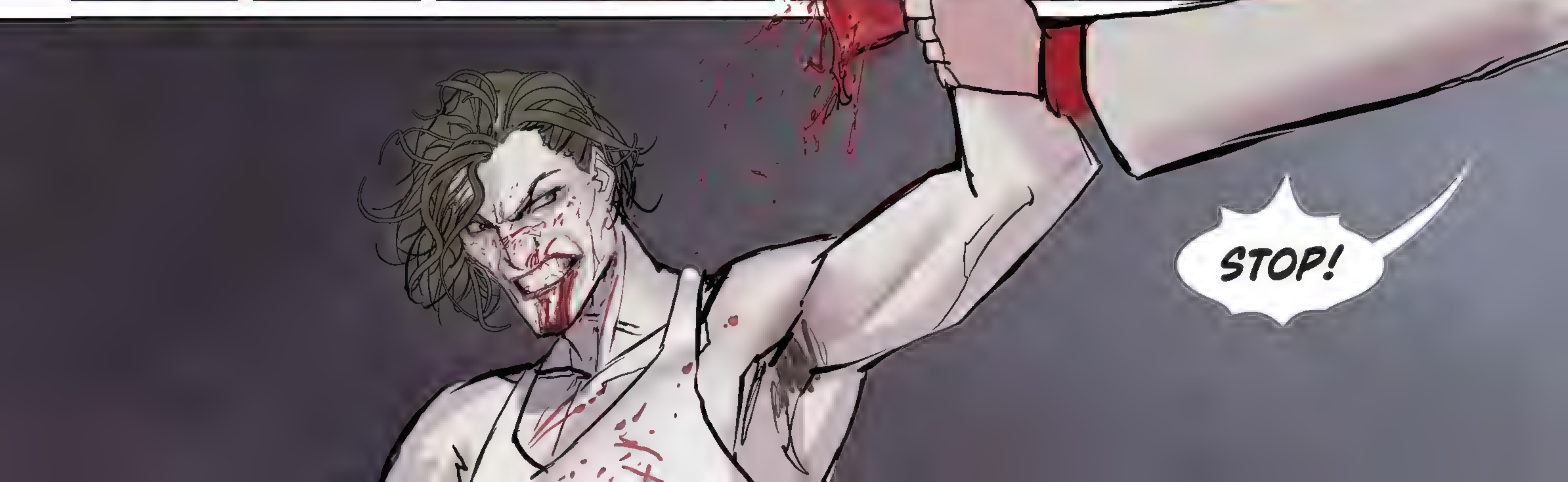
MR. DENT!

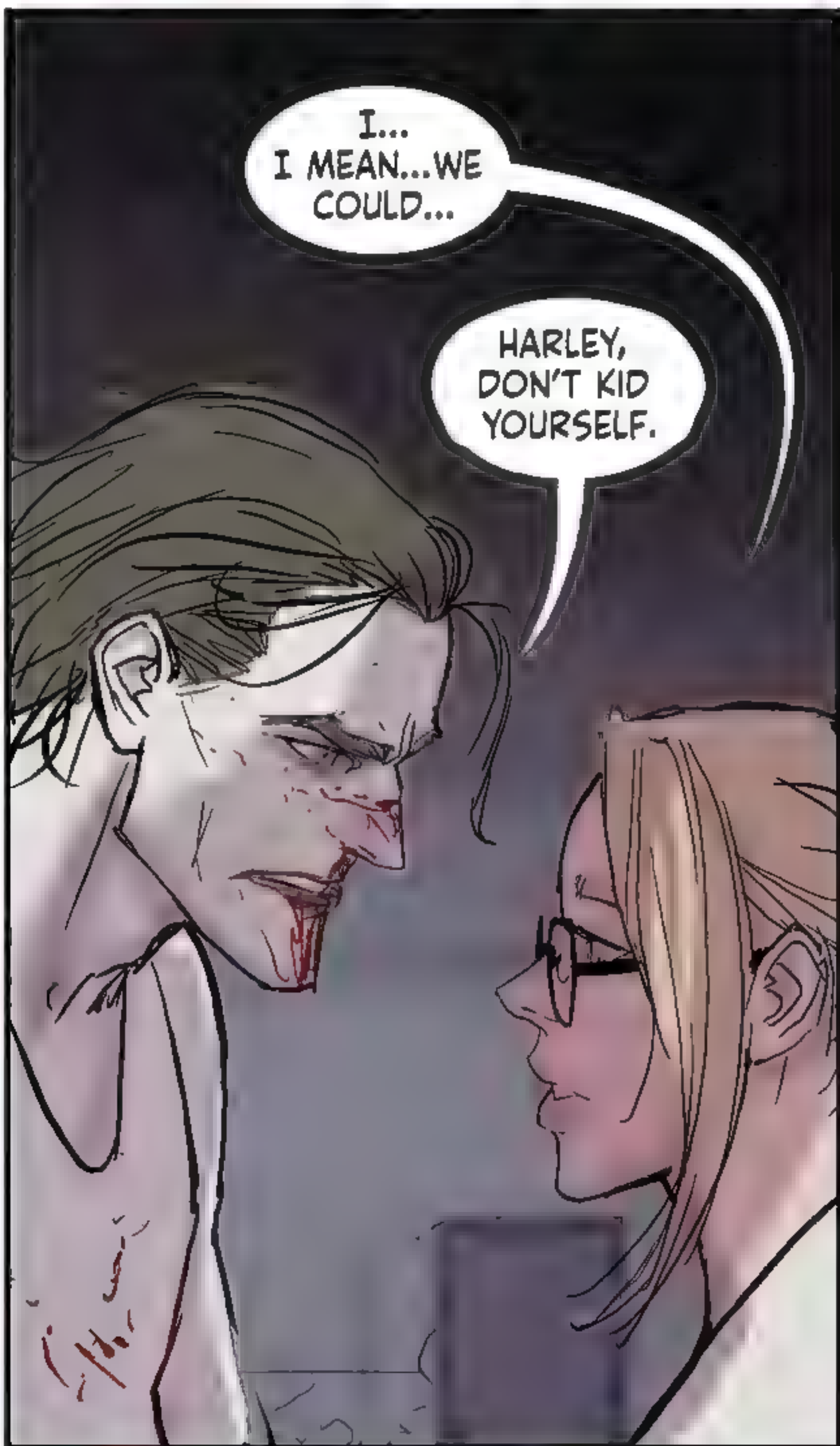
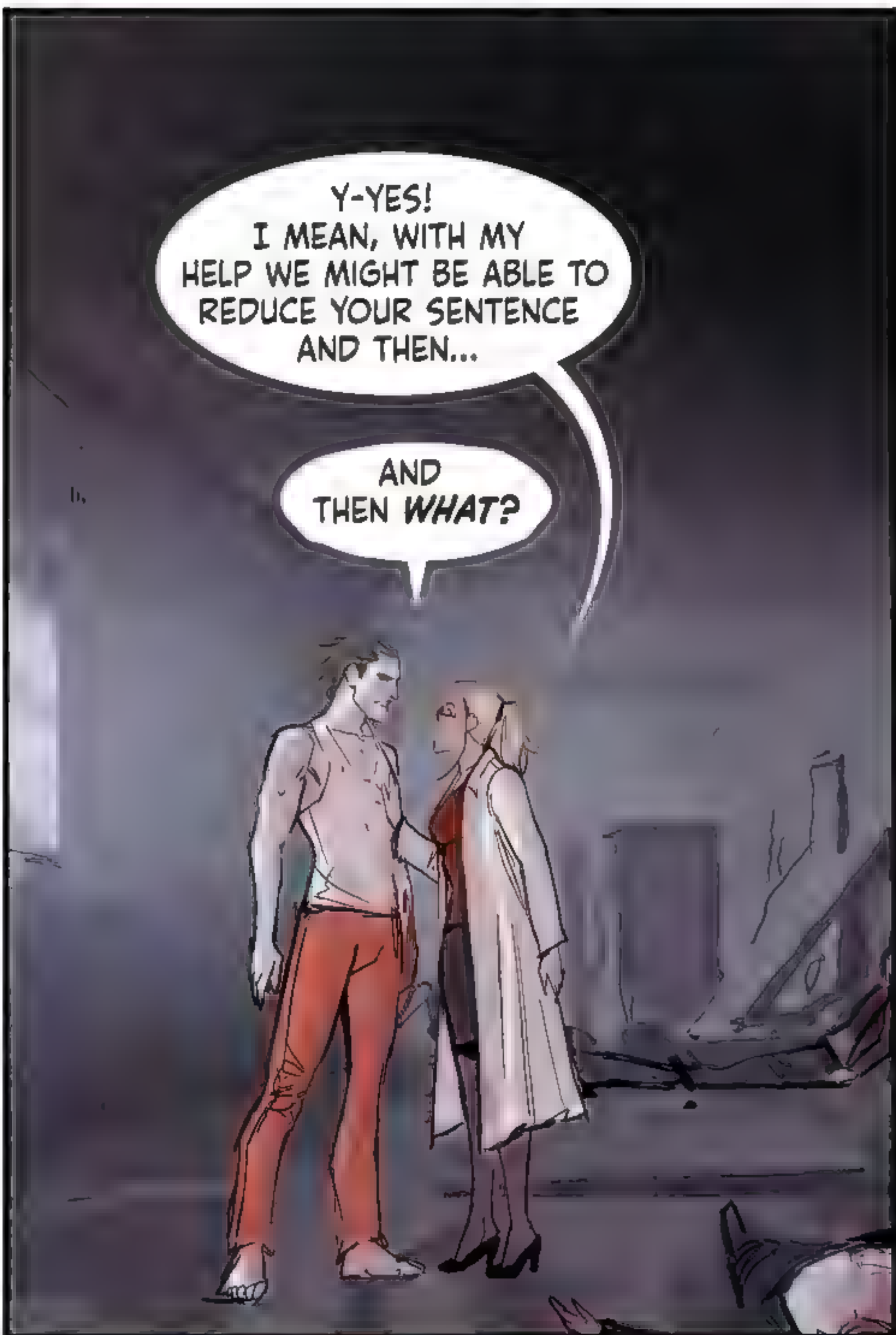
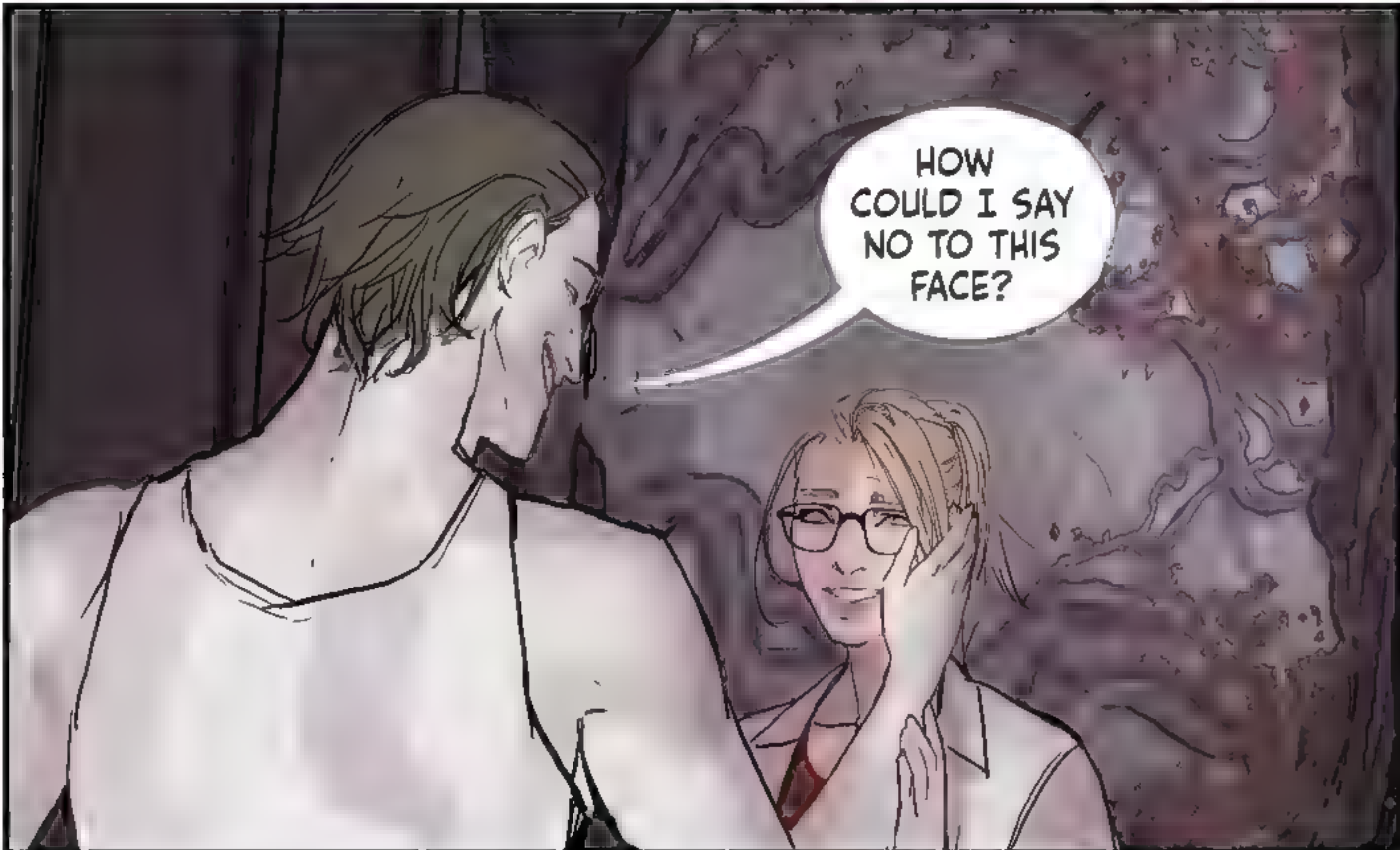
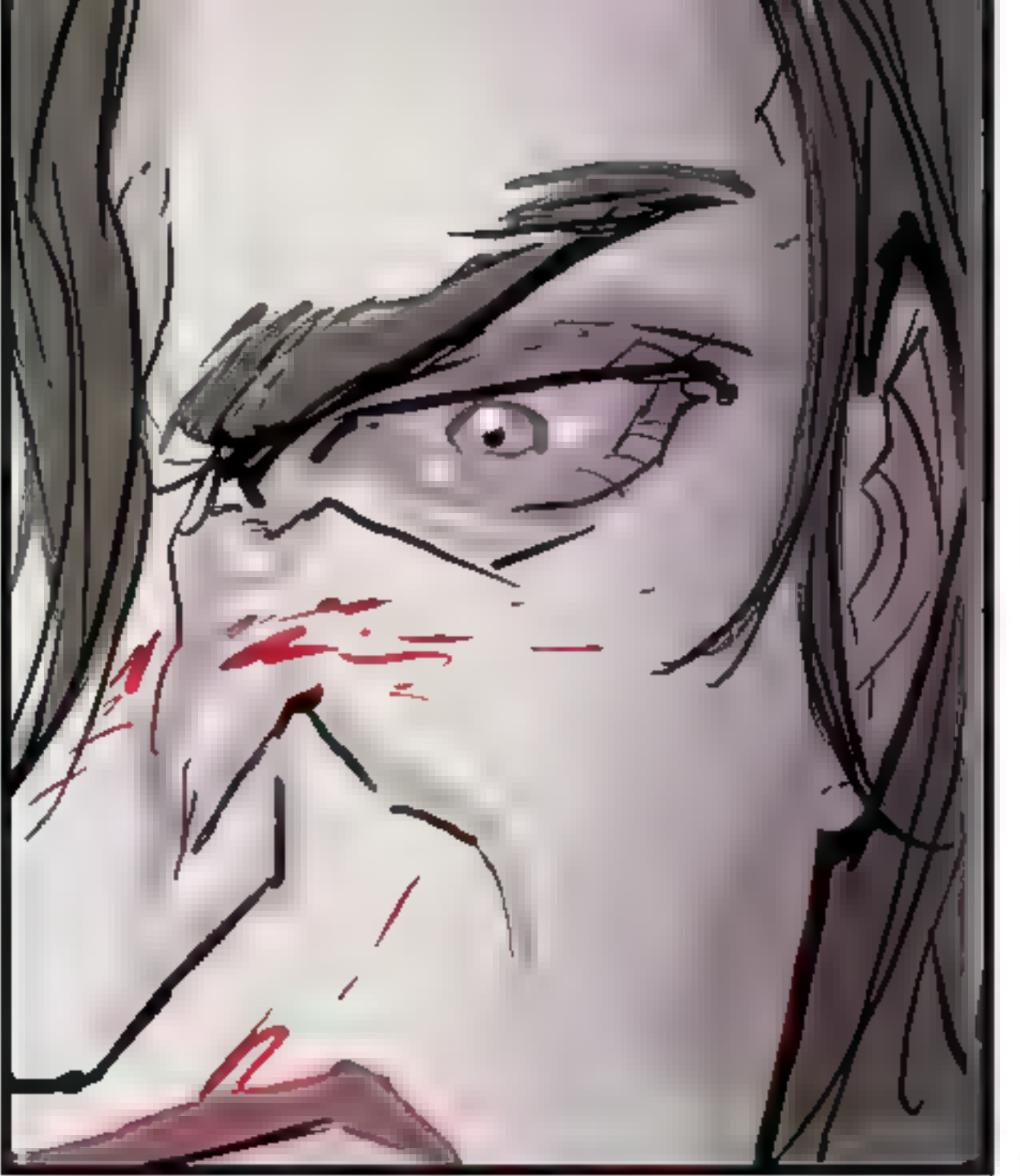


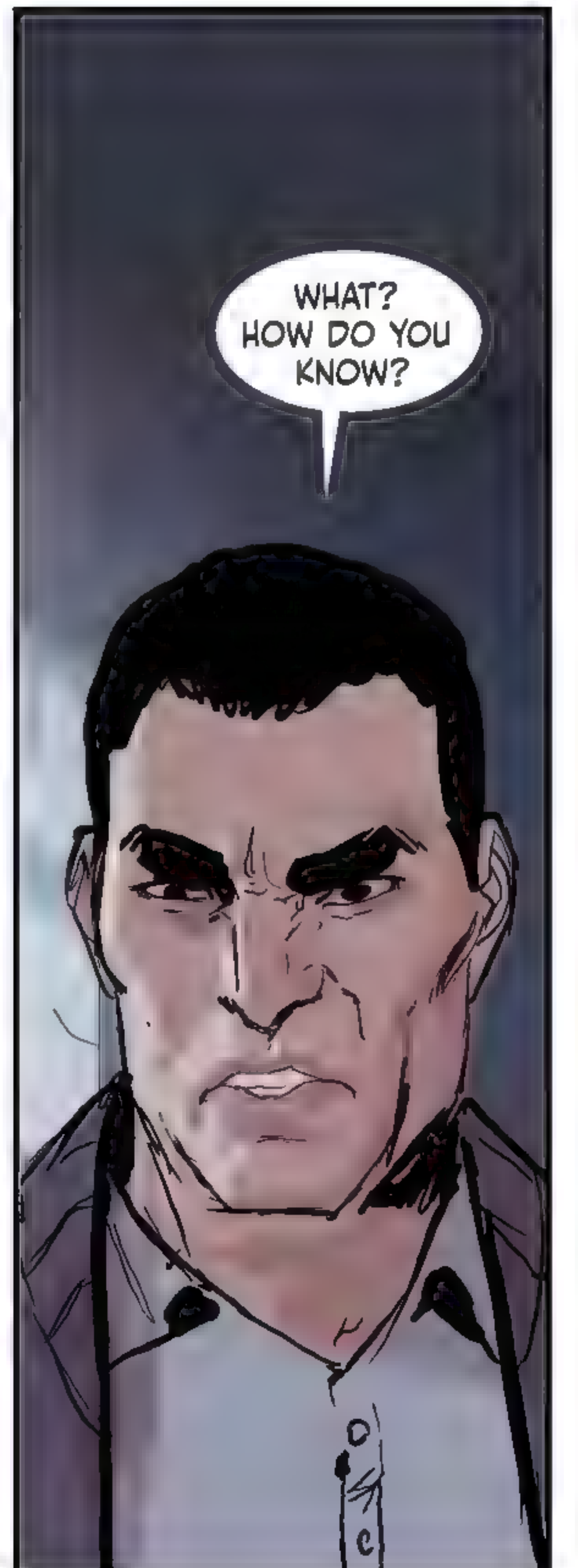
PASS THE
JUDGMENT
HARVEY!

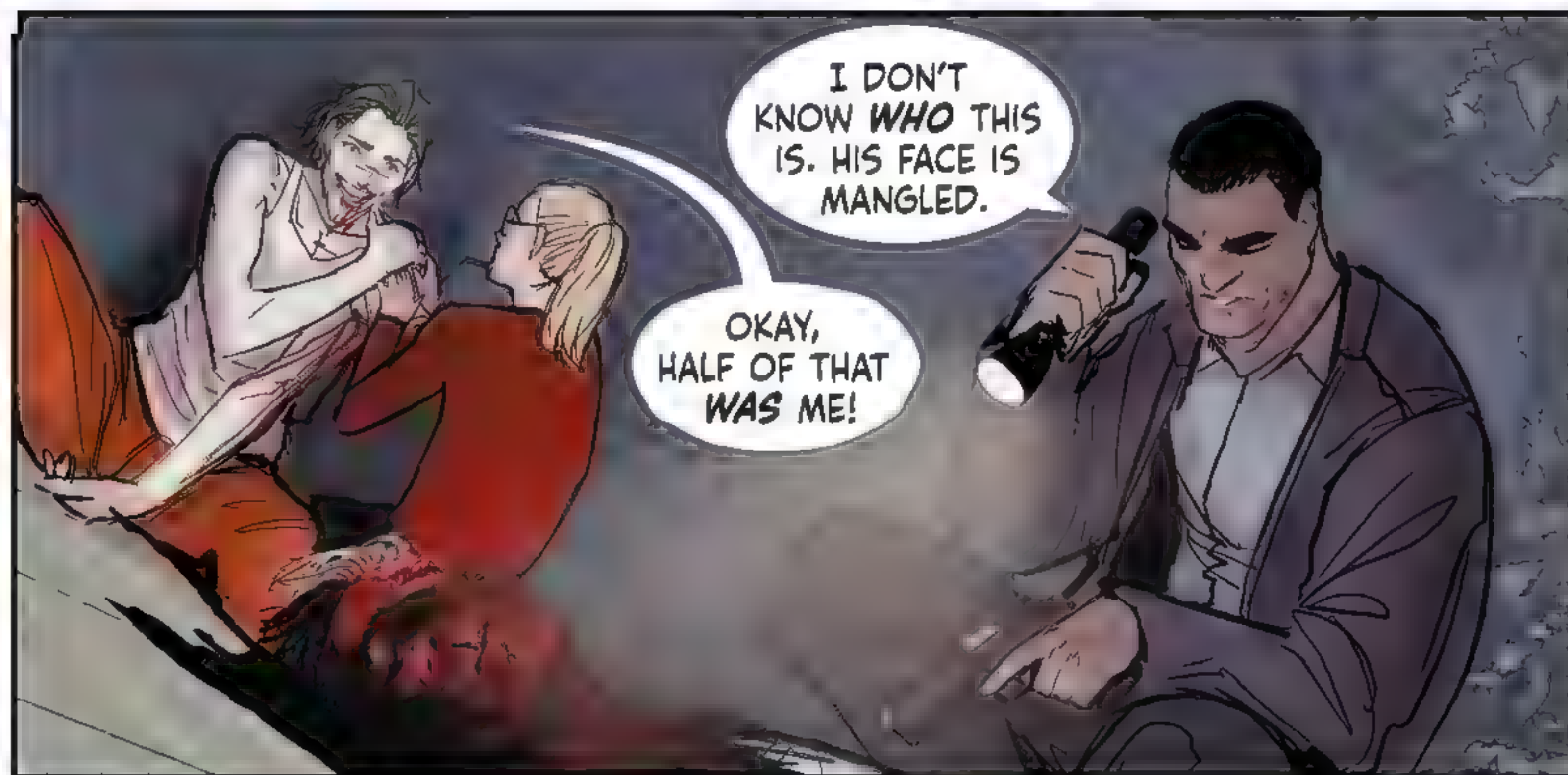
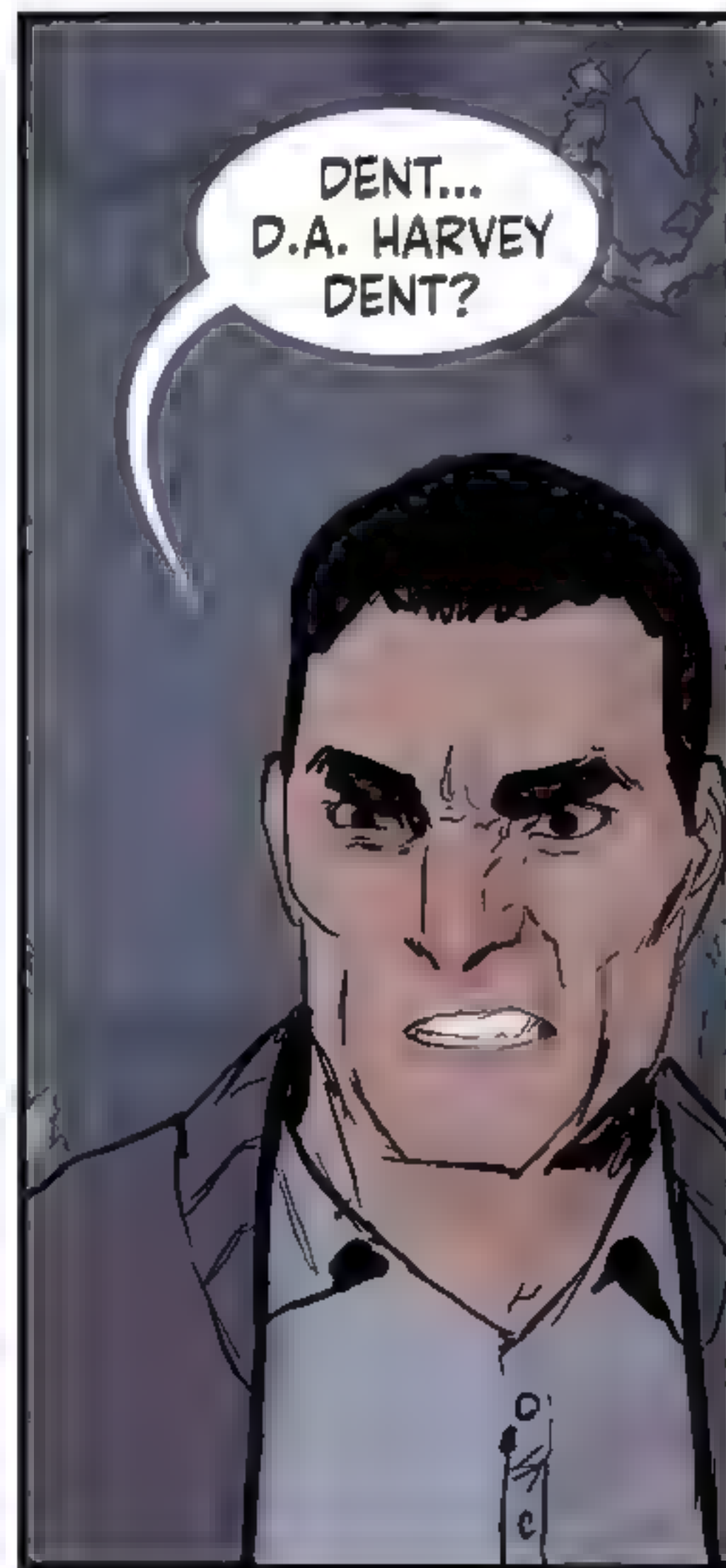
PLEASE!
YOU DON'T
HAVE TO DO
THIS!











I WANT TO SCARE HIM OFF.
I'M AFRAID HE'LL EXECUTE JAY
RIGHT HERE AND RIGHT NOW.

MY HANDS ARE SHAKING.
I'VE NEVER HELD A GUN BEFORE.
I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT SAFETY,
ABOUT TRIGGER DISCIPLINE.

I HOLD IT TOO TIGHTLY,
TO STOP MYSELF SHAKING.

AND THEN I FEEL IT KICK,
AND IN THAT ETERNITY OF
A MOMENT I KNOW IT'S
TOO LATE.

...THAT I IGNORED.

I THOUGHT OF
MR. BRONSON'S
GOOD ADVICE...

OH,
YOU PROBABLY
SHOULDN'T
SMILE...

BLAM

I THOUGHT OF
THE BAD HABITS...

THE WARNING SIGNS...

AND, MORE THAN
ANYTHING, THAT LAST
EXIT I REFUSED TO
WALK THROUGH.

AFTER
ALL, YOU'RE
ONLY *TRULY* SAVED
IF YOU LEAVE THIS
PLACE.

THE WRONG TURNS...

...I SHOULDN'T
HAVE TAKEN.





NONE OF THAT
MATTERED ANYMORE.



NO...



NO!





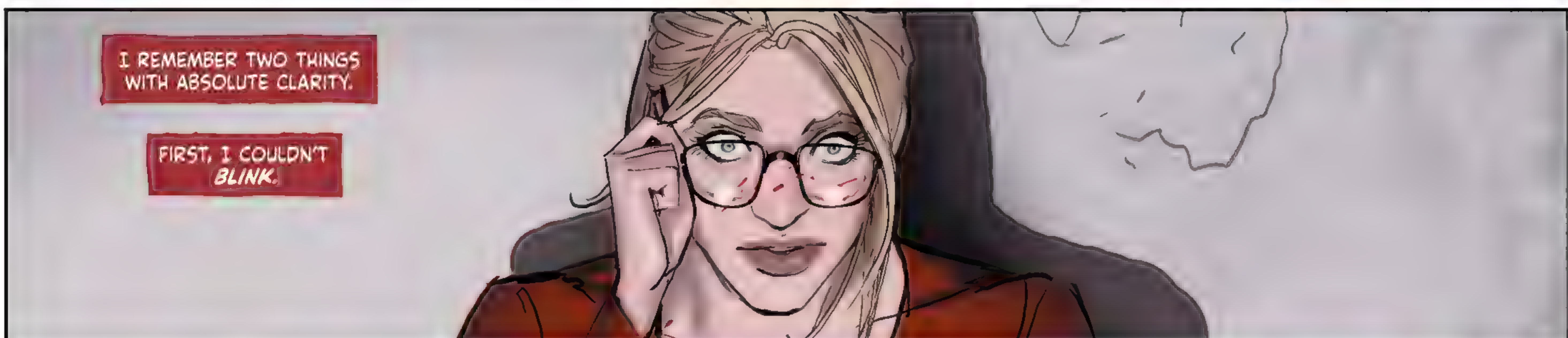
IT WAS A MOMENT OF
INESCAPABLE FINALITY.

I WAS A
MURDERER.

I KILLED A MAN.
A **GOOD** MAN.

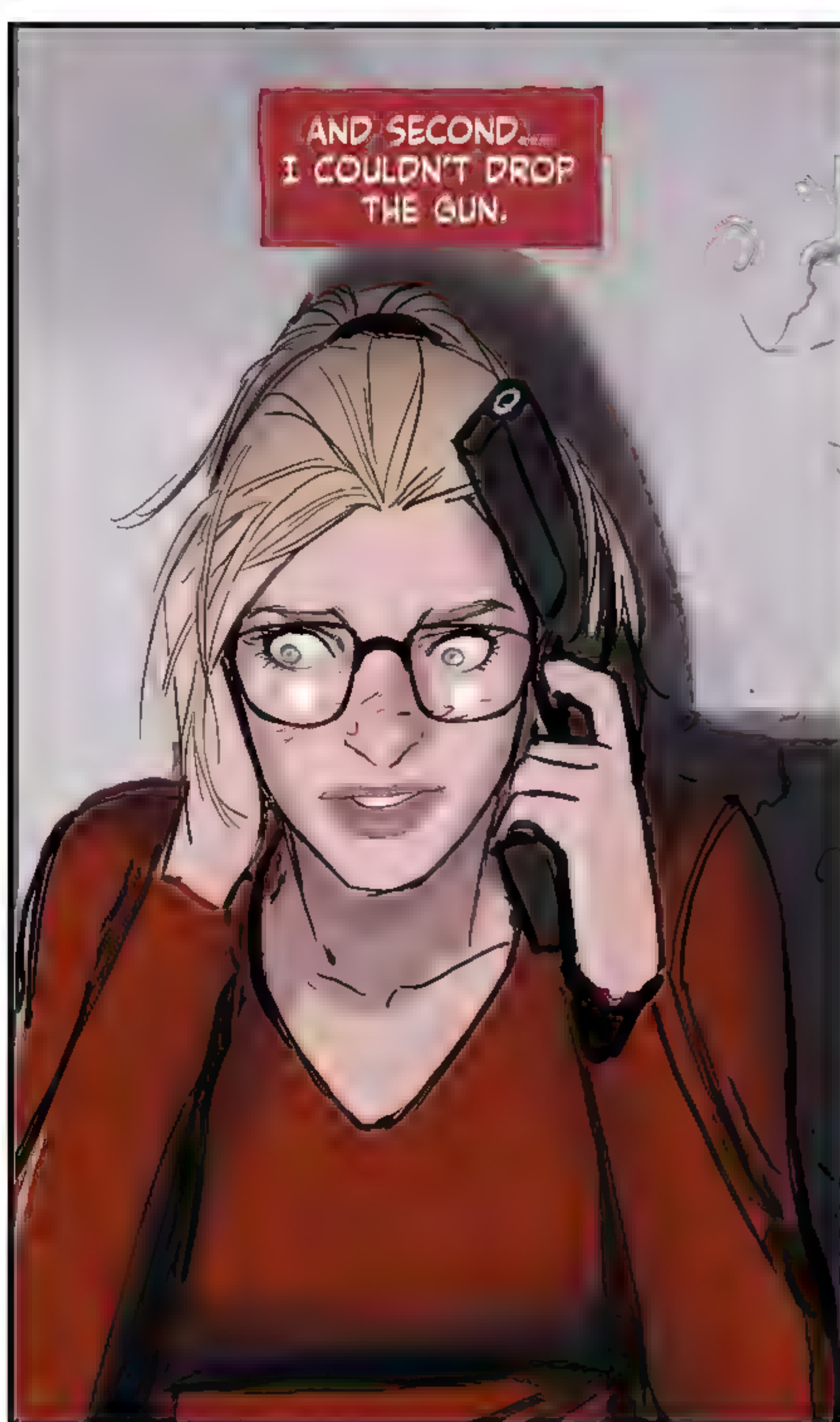
ALL HE EVER WAS, ALL HE
EVER WOULD BE, GONE.

AND THE SAME WAS TRUE
FOR HARLEEN QUINZEL.



I REMEMBER TWO THINGS
WITH ABSOLUTE CLARITY.

FIRST, I COULDN'T
BLINK.



AND SECOND...
I COULDN'T DROP
THE GUN.



I COULDN'T DROP IT BECAUSE
I WAS CONSIDERING PULLING THE
TRIGGER ONE LAST TIME...



BUT IN A DESPERATE MOMENT OF
SELF-PRESERVATION, MY MIND
NOTICED SOMETHING...SOMETHING
ABSURD. SOMETHING...**FUNNY.**



...WHAT'S FUNNY?

HA HA HA HA
IT...
ALL OF IT.
IT'S ALL JUST...
FUNNY!
I MEAN,
YOU WERE
RIGHT!



I WANTED
TO HELP...
...BUT I'M JUST
A **MONSTER**...
...LIKE
EVERYONE
ELSE IN THIS
CITY.

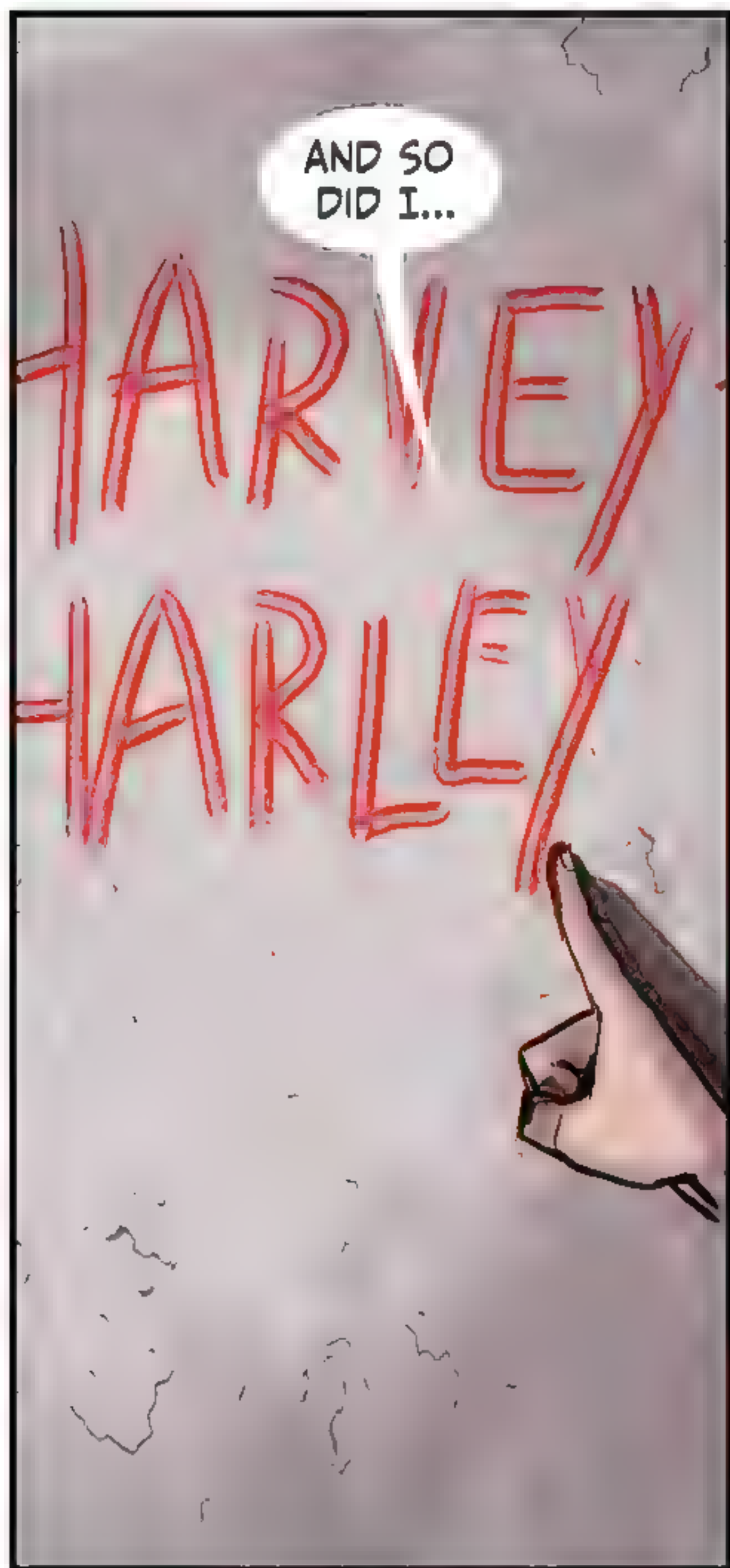


IT DOESN'T
MATTER HOW GOOD
YOUR **INTENTIONS**
ARE.
I MEAN...
JUST ASK HARVEY
HERE.



HE
WANTS TO
SAVE GOTHAM
IN HIS OWN
WAY.

HARVEY



AND SO
DID I...

HARVEY
HARLEY

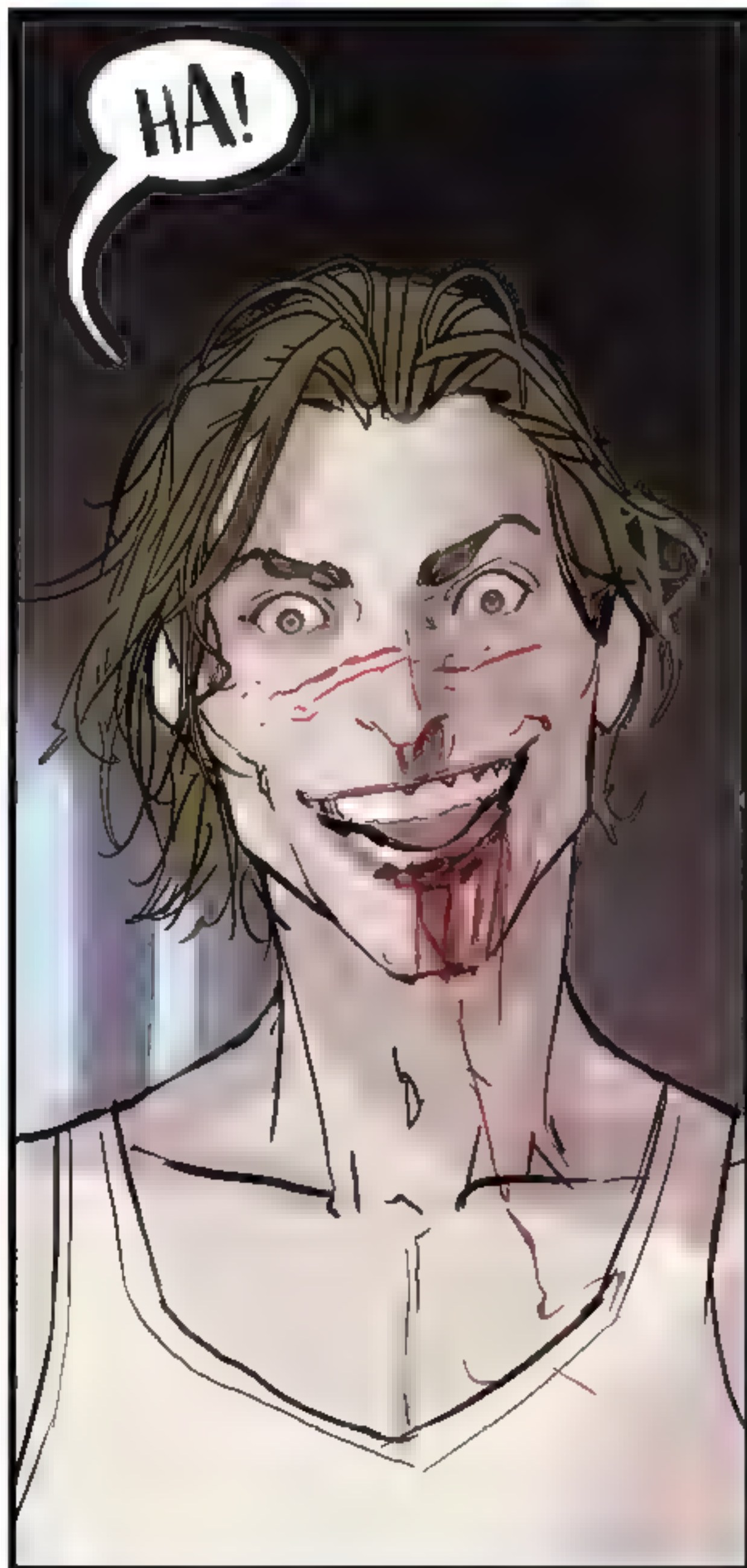


IN THE
END...WELL, LOOK AT US.
BOTH MURDERERS. AND THE
FUNNY THING IS, I JUST
NOTICED IT!
IT'S BEEN
STARING US **IN THE**
FACE!

HARVEY
HARLEY



ALL OF OUR
GOOD INTENTIONS
WERE JUST A
**BIG
FUCKING
JOKE!**

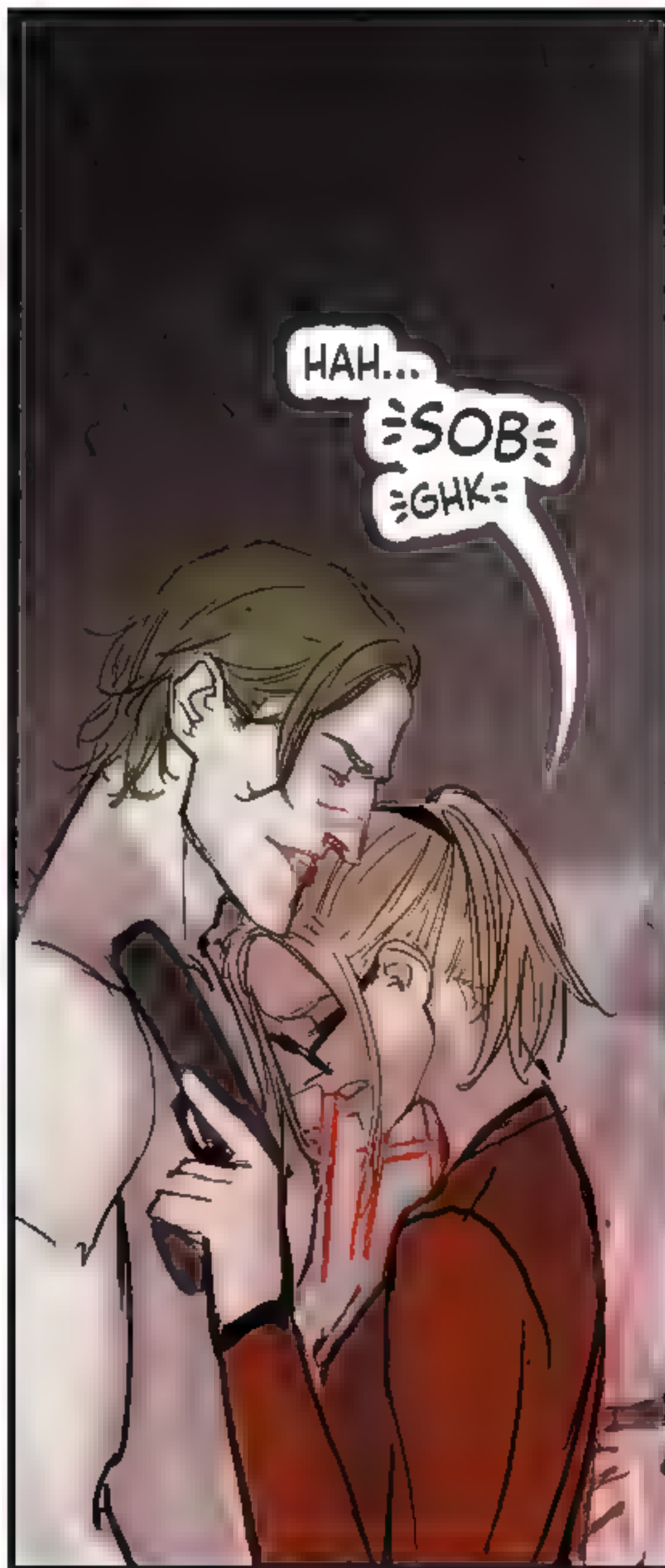


HA!

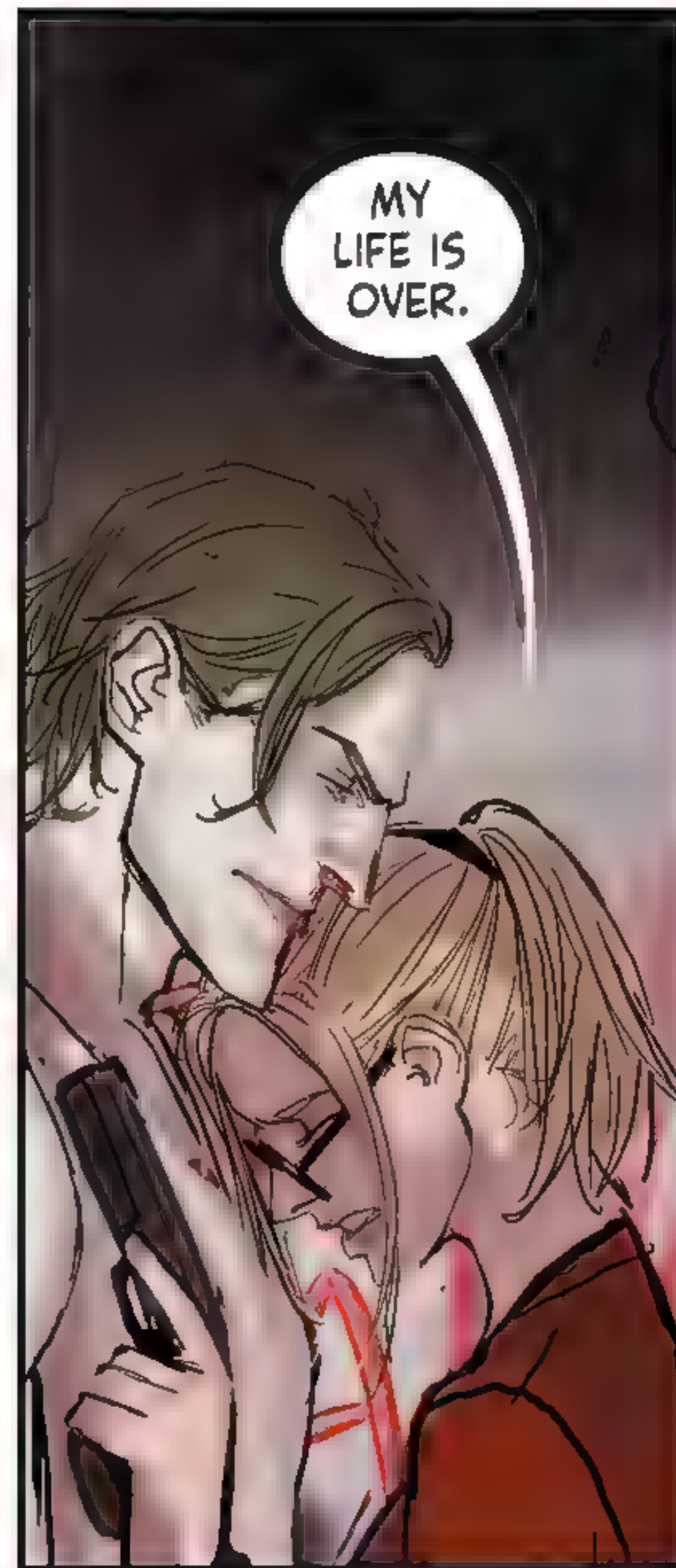


HA HA HA
HA HA HA
HA HA HA

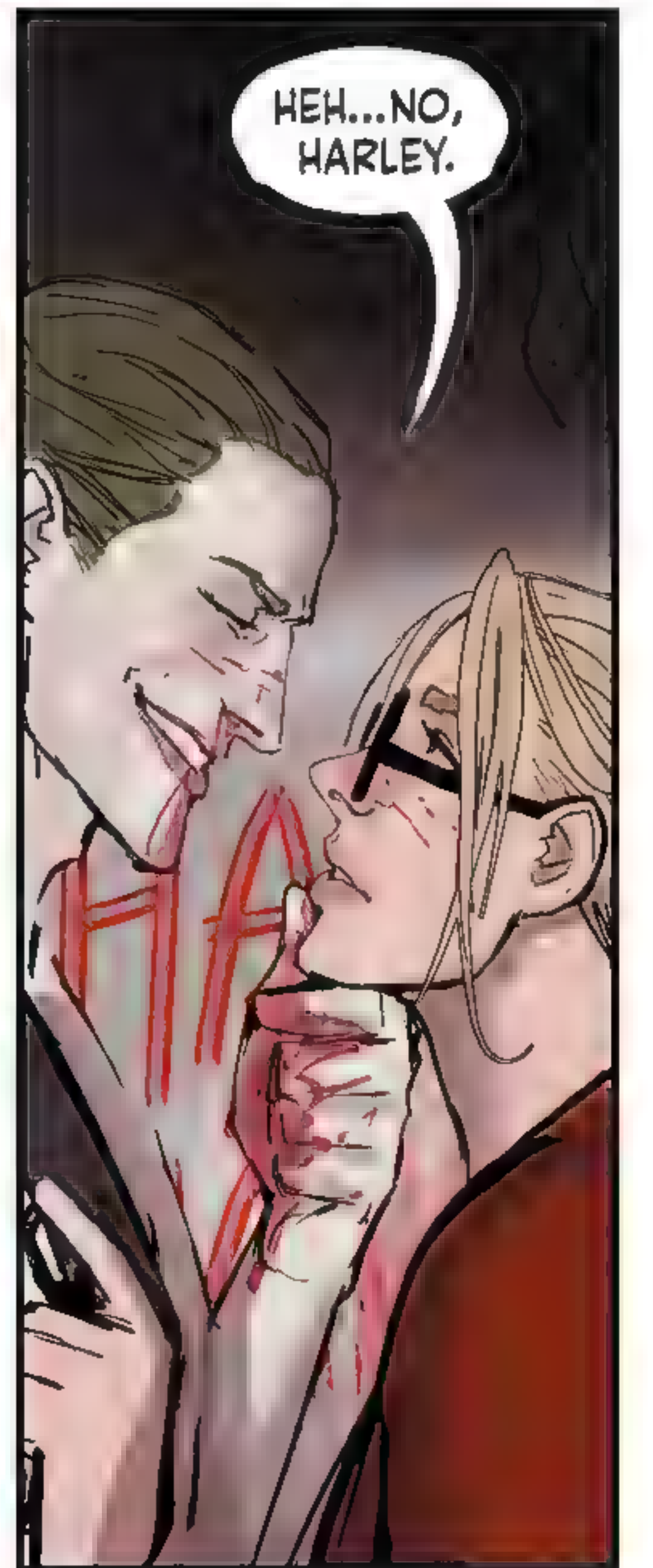
HA HA HA
HA HA HA



HAH...
=SOB=
=GHK=



MY
LIFE IS
OVER.



HEH...NO,
HARLEY.



NO, NO, NO, NO.
WE'RE
JUST GETTING
STARTED.

I SURRENDERED MYSELF
INTO HIS ARMS. A PLEASANT
MIST ENVELOPED MY MIND
AS I SANK INTO HIS KISS.

WHY NOT, I THOUGHT. IF
HE COULD BE THE JOKER, I
COULD BE HIS HARLEQUIN.

AND WHO KNOWS...
MAYBE SOMEDAY MY
LOVE COULD CURE HIM.

I CHUCKLED
TO MYSELF.

THE BATCAVE.

Three weeks later.



HOW GOES
THE ARKHAM
INVESTIGATION,
SIR?

I FOUND
THIS FILE HIDDEN
IN THE JOKER'S
CELL.
IT'S
DR. QUINZEL'S
RESEARCH.

SHE HAD SOME
INITIAL INTEREST IN THE JOKER
AS A CANDIDATE FOR TESTING HER
THEORIES, BUT AFTER A CERTAIN
POINT HE BECAME THE MAIN
FOCUS OF HER
STUDY.

LISTEN TO
THIS...
"IN A WAR ZONE,
EMPATHY IS A *LIABILITY*.
ACKNOWLEDGING THE HUMANITY
OF YOUR ENEMY WILL CAUSE YOU
TO HESITATE. IT IS A COURTESY
YOUR OPPONENT MAY NOT
GRANT YOU IN
RETURN."

THAT'S QUITE
CHILLING.

IT'S FROM
AN INTERVIEW
SHE CONDUCTED WITH
A FORMER MILITARY
OFFICER.
A MURDERER.

NOW WATCH
THIS, FROM ONE
OF HER JOKER
SESSIONS...

W-WHAT?

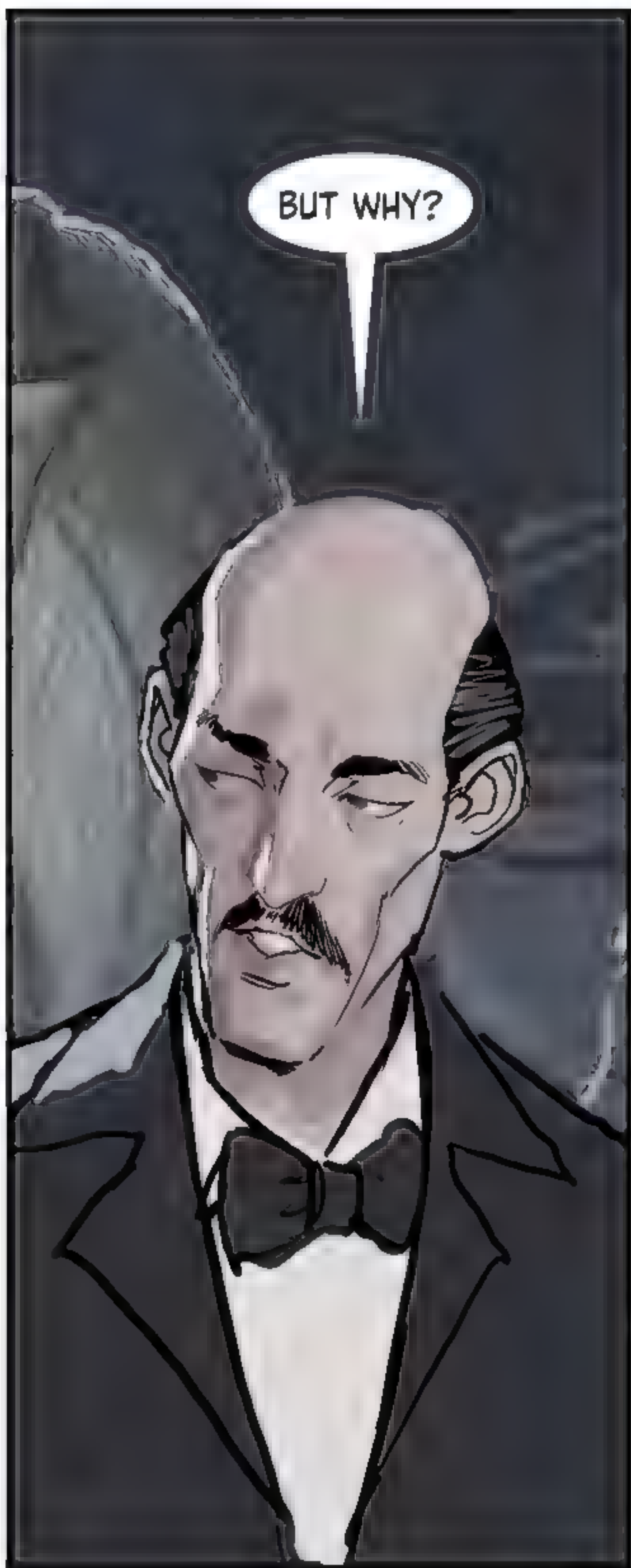
I MEAN,
REGRET, GUILT...
EMPATHY...THEY
BRING ABOUT
HESITATION.

AND ON
THE STREETS,
HESITATION WILL
GET YOU CAUGHT...

...GET
YOU *KILLED*. I
ALWAYS PICUTRED WE
KILLED THAT PART
OF OURSELVES
FIRST.

HE
CHANGED SOME
PHRASING,
BUT...

YES. IT'S
TAKEN ALMOST
WORD FOR WORD
FROM HER OWN
RESEARCH.



BUT WHY?



HE SAW HER AS HIS
TICKET OUT OF
ARKHAM.

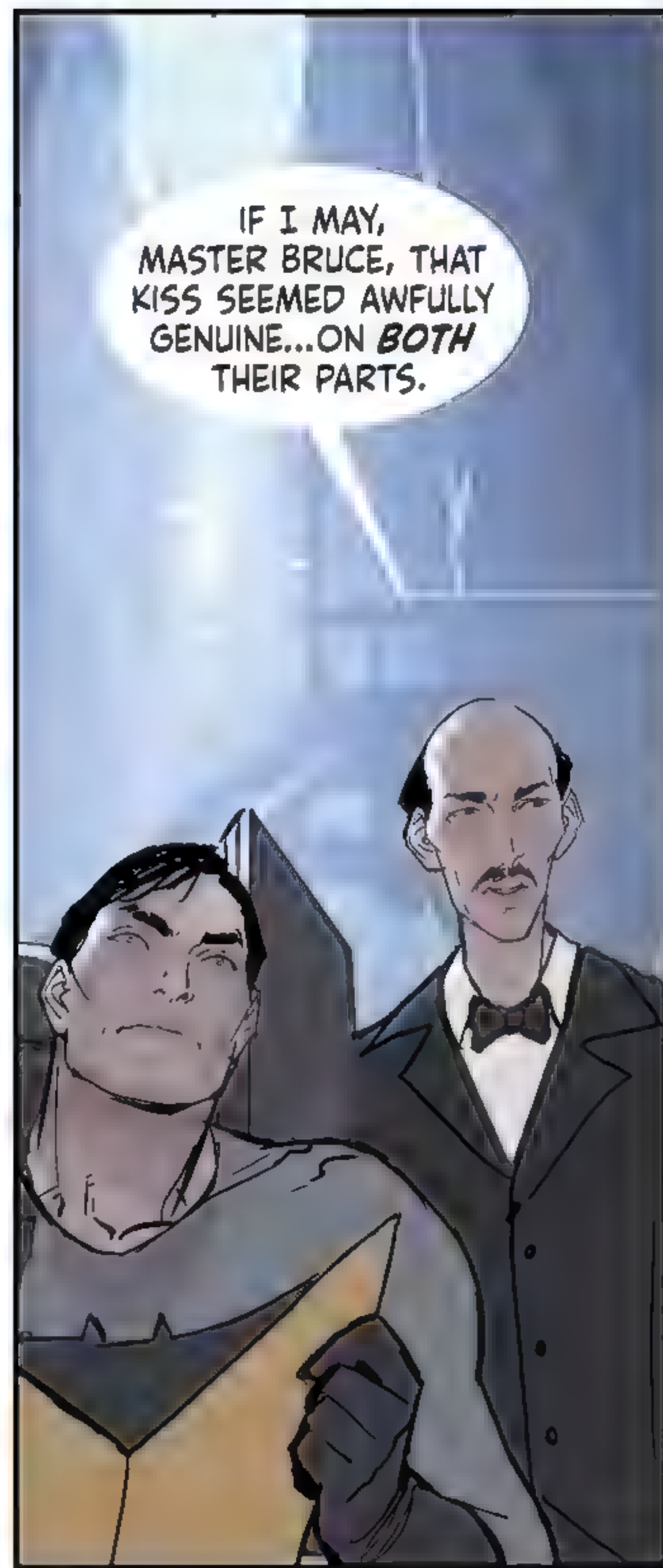
ALL HE
HAD TO DO WAS MAKE
HIMSELF THE PERFECT PATIENT,
THE PERFECT VALIDATION
OF HER WORK.



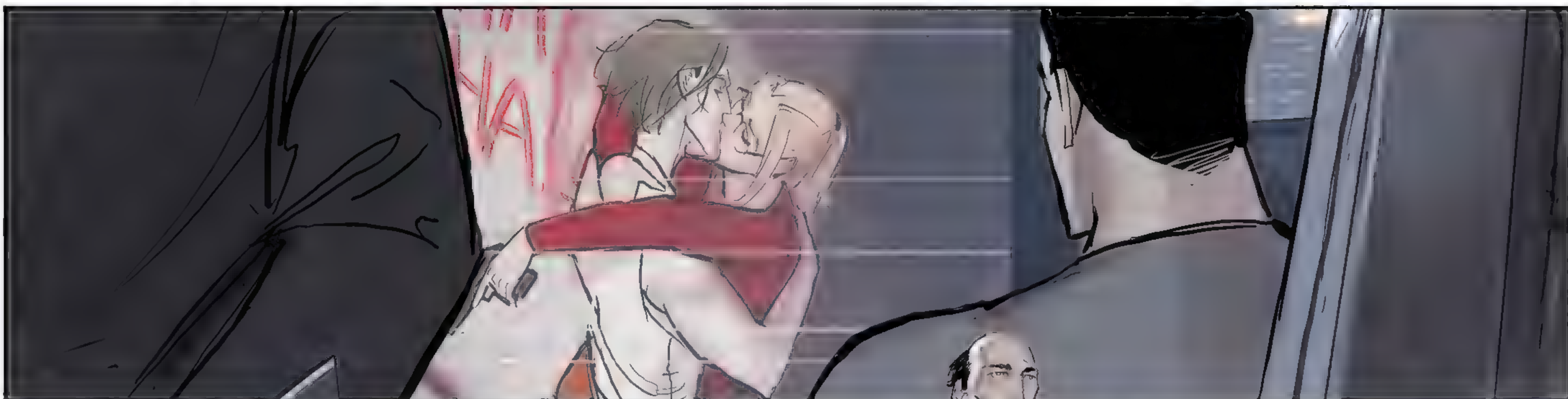
THE JOKER'S A MASTER
MANIPULATOR.

WHEN THE
EXECUTIONERS MADE
THEIR MOVE ON ARKHAM,
HE'D ALREADY PRIMED HER
TO SACRIFICE HERSELF
FOR HIM.

HARLEEN
FELL FOR HIS
LIES.



IF I MAY,
MASTER BRUCE, THAT
KISS SEEMED AWFULLY
GENUINE...ON *BOTH*
THEIR PARTS.



WHAT
ARE YOU SAYING,
ALFRED?
THE
JOKER IS IN
LOVE?

WELL, LOVE
IS A BIT TOO STRONG OF
A WORD... BUT THEY DO
SEEM *CRAZY* ABOUT
ONE ANOTHER

THEN
AGAIN, IN GOTHAM
CITY, *CRAZY* CERTAINLY
SEEMS TO BE
CONTAGIOUS.



SHE
WANTED TO CURE
THAT...

AND...I
FUNDED HER RESEARCH.
I PUT HER RIGHT IN THE
JOKER'S PATH.

YES, THAT
MAY HAVE BEEN THE
BEGINNING OF HER JOURNEY,
BRUCE. BUT DR. QUINZEL
TOOK THE WRONG TURNS
ON HER OWN.

NO, I
CAN'T BELIEVE
THAT. YOU'VE NEVER
MET HARLEEN,
ALFRED.

SHE
WANTED NOTHING
MORE THAN TO
HELP!

HE TOOK HER **WORK** AND
HER **KINDNESS** AND
USED IT AGAINST
HER!

PERHAPS.
GIVEN YOUR HISTORY, IT
MAKES SENSE YOU WOULD
SEE IT LIKE THAT, BUT WE
CAN'T KNOW FOR
SURE.

HOWEVER,
IF DR. QUINZEL'S FATE
WEIGHS SO HEAVILY ON
YOUR HEART, THEN TAKE
MY ADVICE.

IF SHE IS
LOST, THEN BE A
BEACON.

"...A LIGHT IN THE STORM TO
SHOW HER THE WAY BACK."

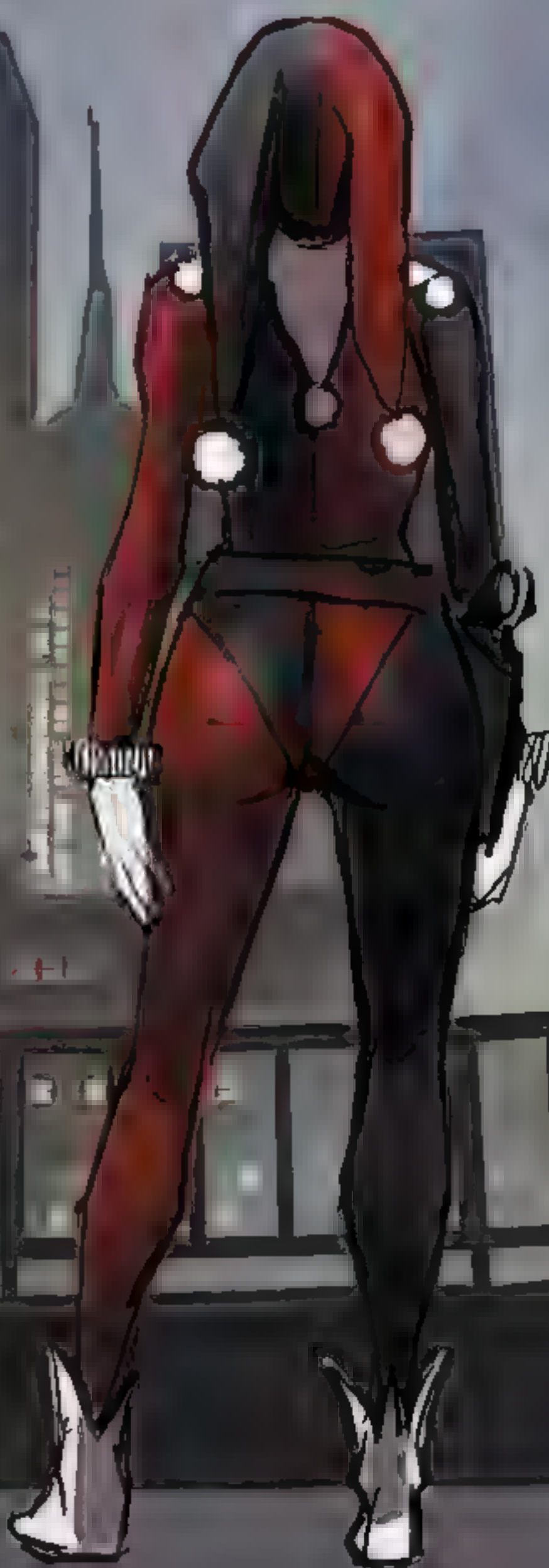
FOUR YEARS LATER.

THE MOON IS FULL AGAIN.

IT'S HOW I KNOW
THIS IS ALL A DREAM.

THE MOON IS
ALWAYS FULL.

SOMEONE ONCE TOLD ME
THAT WAS A GOTHAM THING.

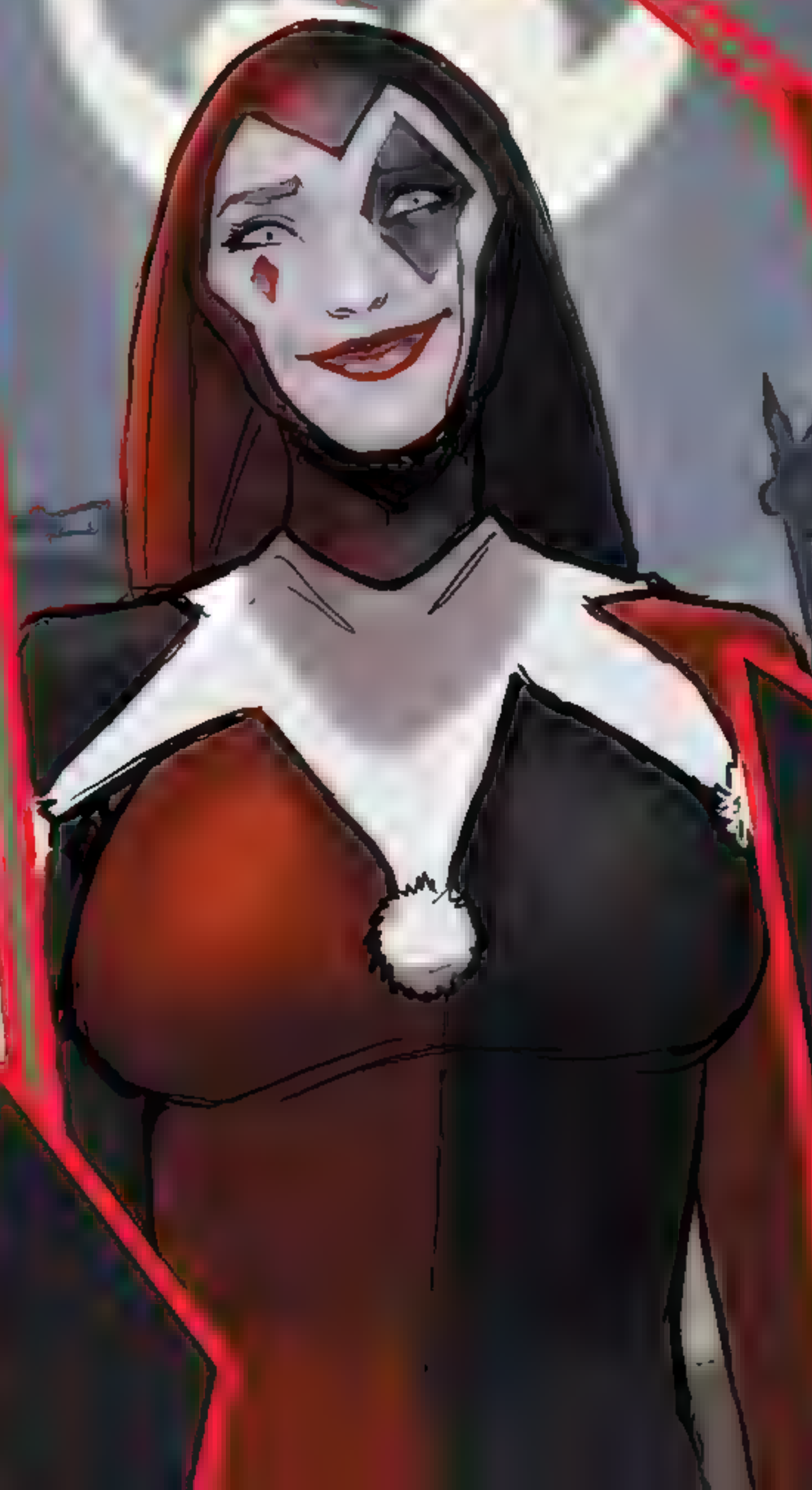
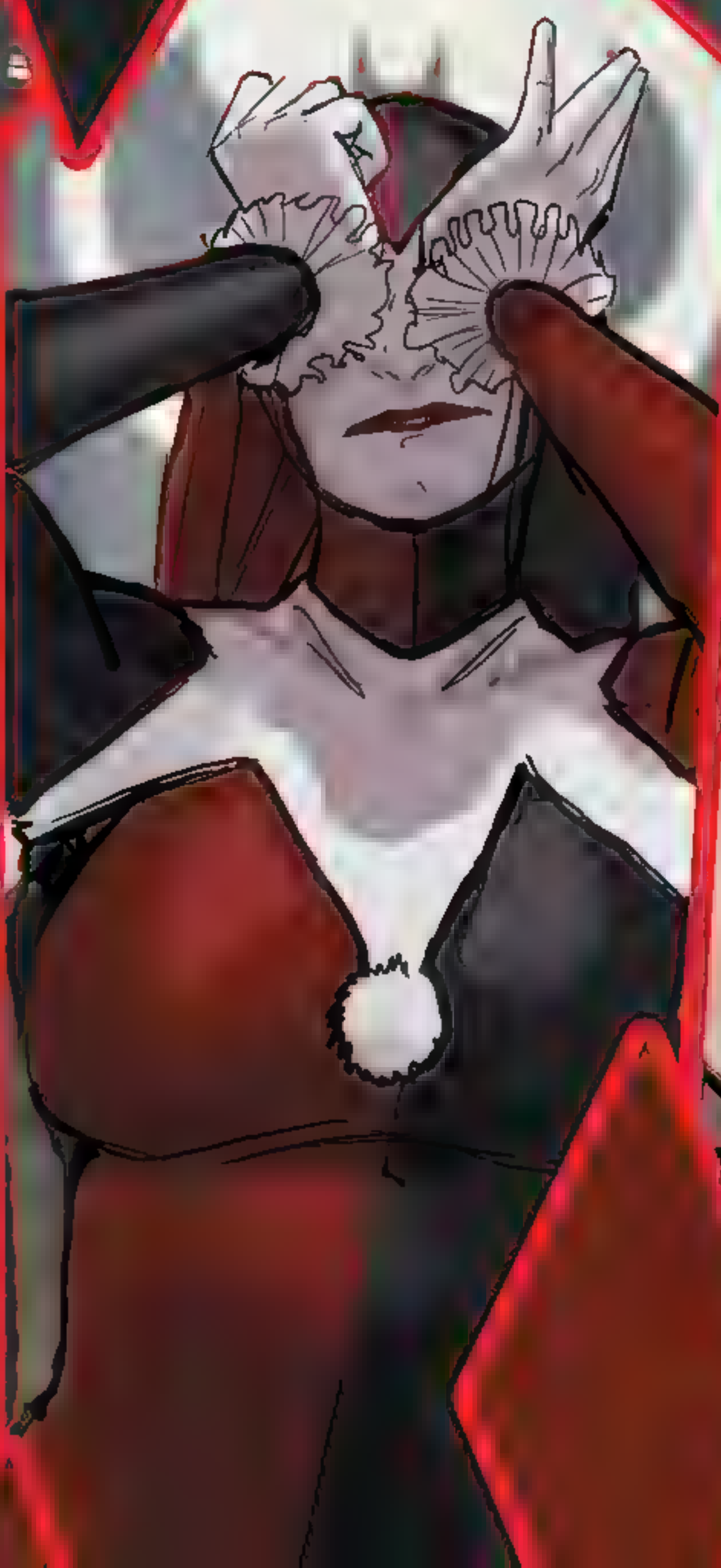


HARD TO REMEMBER
WHO THAT WAS.

NOWADAYS A LOT OF
THINGS ARE FUZZY. A FEW
TUMBLES TOO MANY.

THE LAUGHING GAS
PROBABLY DIDN'T HELP.

NO...NO. IT'S ALL FUZZY BECAUSE
DREAMS ARE LIKE THAT...





IN THE DREAM
I SMILE.

AFTER ALL, THIS IS
WHERE I BELONG.

IN HIS WORLD.

WITH HIM...

BECAUSE I
LOVE HIM.

BECAUSE I CAN
STILL HELP HIM.

BECAUSE EVEN IN THE
DREAM, I HOPE I CAN
STILL SAVE HIM.

IT'S A GOOD DREAM.

IT'S JUST...THERE'S A SMALL, LUCID
PART OF ME THAT WANTS TO WAKE UP.
THE DREAM HAS LASTED QUITE A WHILE.
A LONG TIME IN THE DARK.

I MEAN, EVEN THE DARKEST
NIGHT MUST END...

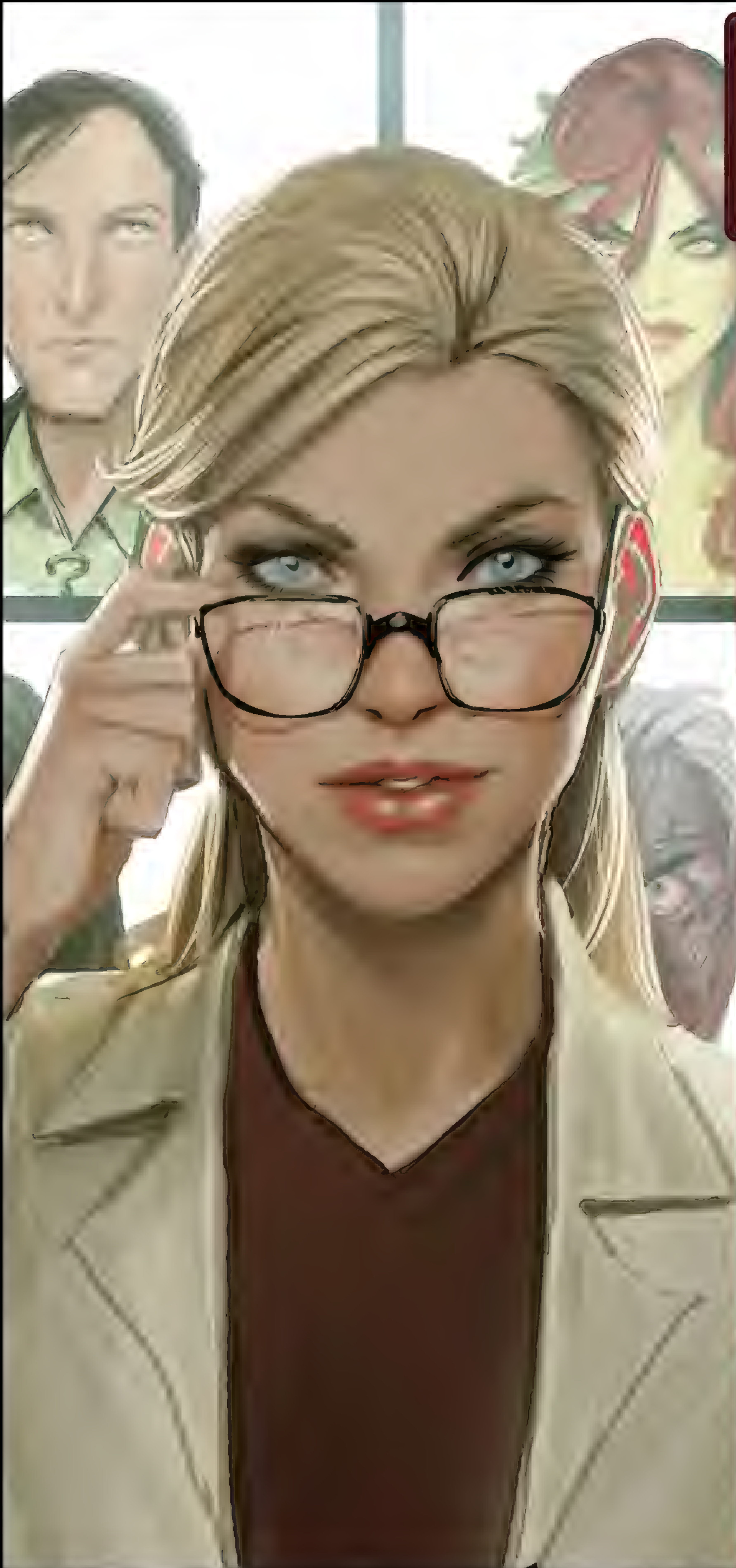
...RIGHT?











Unused cover concept

HARLEEN

JOURNEY INTO MADNESS

A Graphic Timeline of Stjepan Šejić's *Harleen*

2015-2016

Harleen begins as a series of comic strips crafted by Stjepan Šejić for his own exploration of the character. These early works are not full issues, but rather disparate scenes for a story that is gradually taking shape in his mind.



November 2016

Šejić first discusses the possibility of a *Harleen* series with DC editor Andy Khouri, who hires him in January 2017 to draw the "Underworld" story arc for *Aquaman* #225-30.

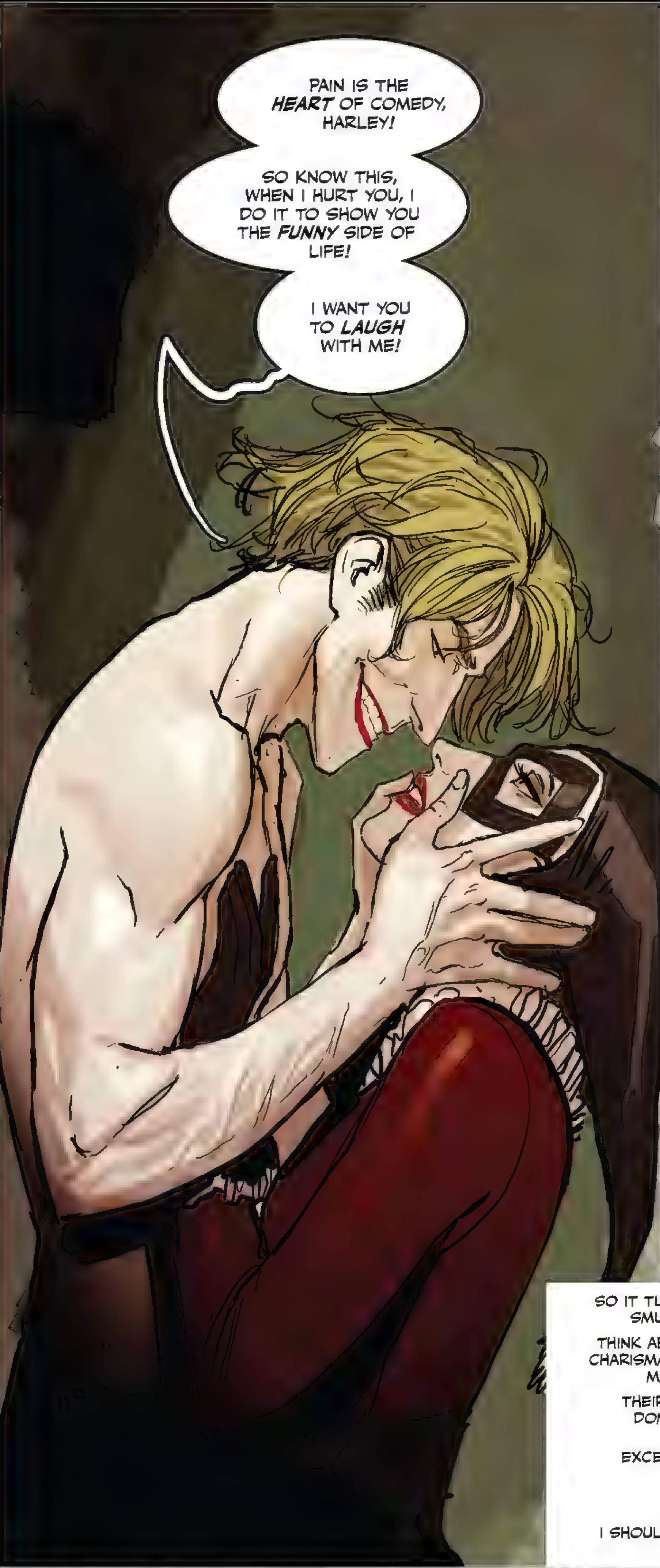


June 2017

Sejic illustrates the story "Managing People" for *Suicide Squad* №20; his vision of Harley Quinn leaps off the issue's pages. In August 2017, discussions over a possible *Harleen* series resume in earnest. Sejic develops the project with Khouri over the next few months.



Harleen is formally approved as a three-issue series for DC Black Label—and the real work begins.



PAIN IS THE
HEART OF COMEDY,
HARLEY!

SO KNOW THIS,
WHEN I HURT YOU, I
DO IT TO SHOW YOU
THE FUNNY SIDE OF
LIFE!

I WANT YOU
TO LAUGH
WITH ME!

SO IT TURNS OUT THAT JOKER AND HARLEY ARE A SMUTTY ROMANCE NOVEL GONE WRONG.

THINK ABOUT IT! WOMAN FALLS FOR A STRANGELY CHARISMATIC AND ATTRACTIVE, YET DANGEROUS, AND MANIPULATIVE SOCIOPATH/PSYCHOPATH

THEIR RELATIONSHIP IS ONE OF UNHEALTHY DOMINANCE AND SUBMISSION. ENDURING PAIN FOR THE HOPE OF LOVE...

EXCEPT, IN NOVELS, THE MONSTER IS TAMED... HERE... IT DEVOURS HER.

WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY IS... I SHOULD REALLY STOP LISTENING TO SMUTTY ROMANCE AUDIOBOOKS!



HARLEEN'S JOKER IS NOT SO MUCH A NICHOLSON OR LEDGER OR LETO HE IS A ROCKSTAR WITH WALL TO WALL... ALSO TO WATCH HIS CROOKY... VISUALLY MORE ALONG THE LINES OF DAVID BOWIE

THROUGH STORY PRESENTS HIMSELF IN MULTIPLE WAYS USUALLY MATCHING HIS OPONENT

AGAINST BATMAN HE IS A CLOWN... SMILES WITH STYLE TO COUNTER BATMAN'S SCOWL UNDER THE COWL

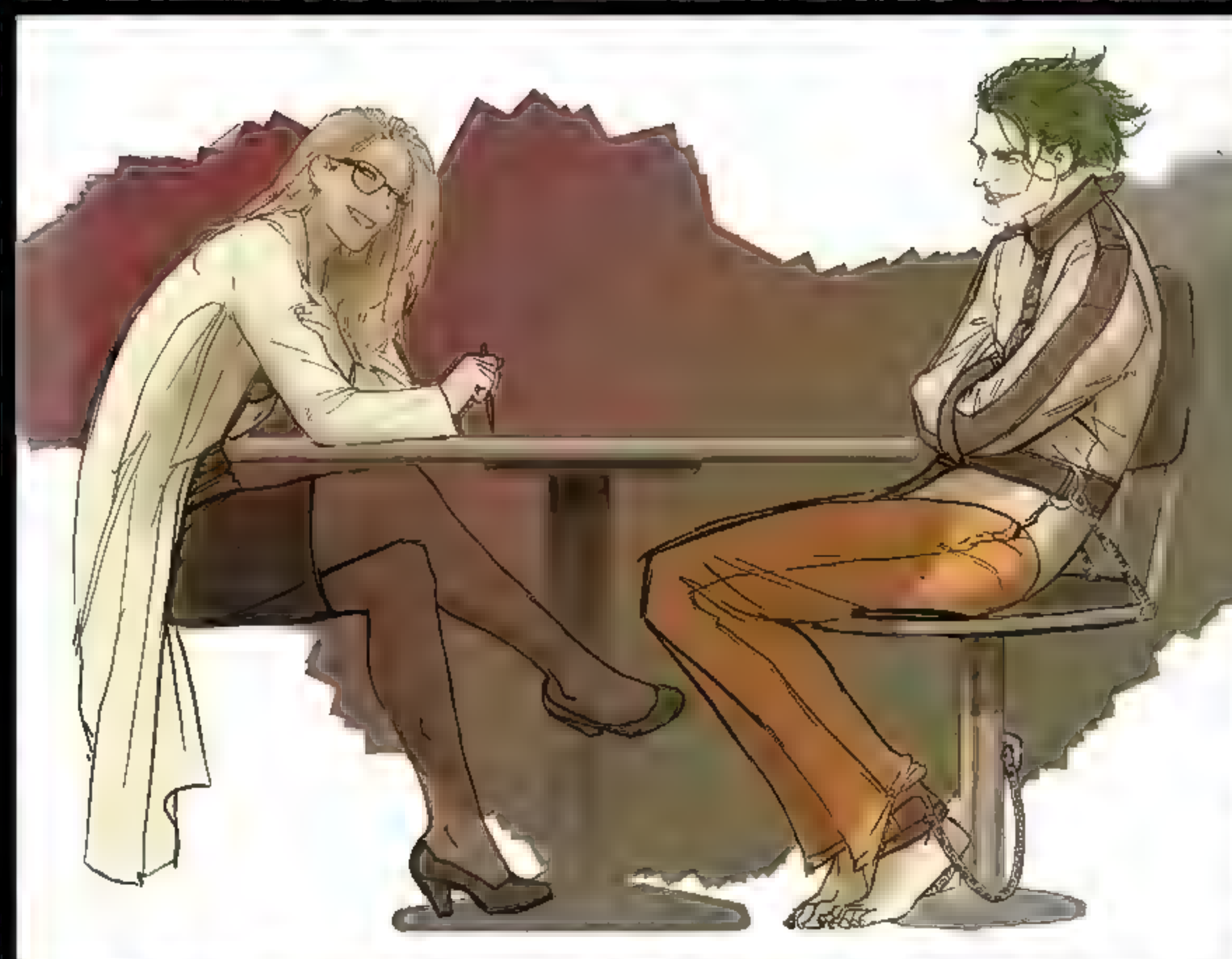
TO HARLES HE IS ODDLY SEDUCTIVE

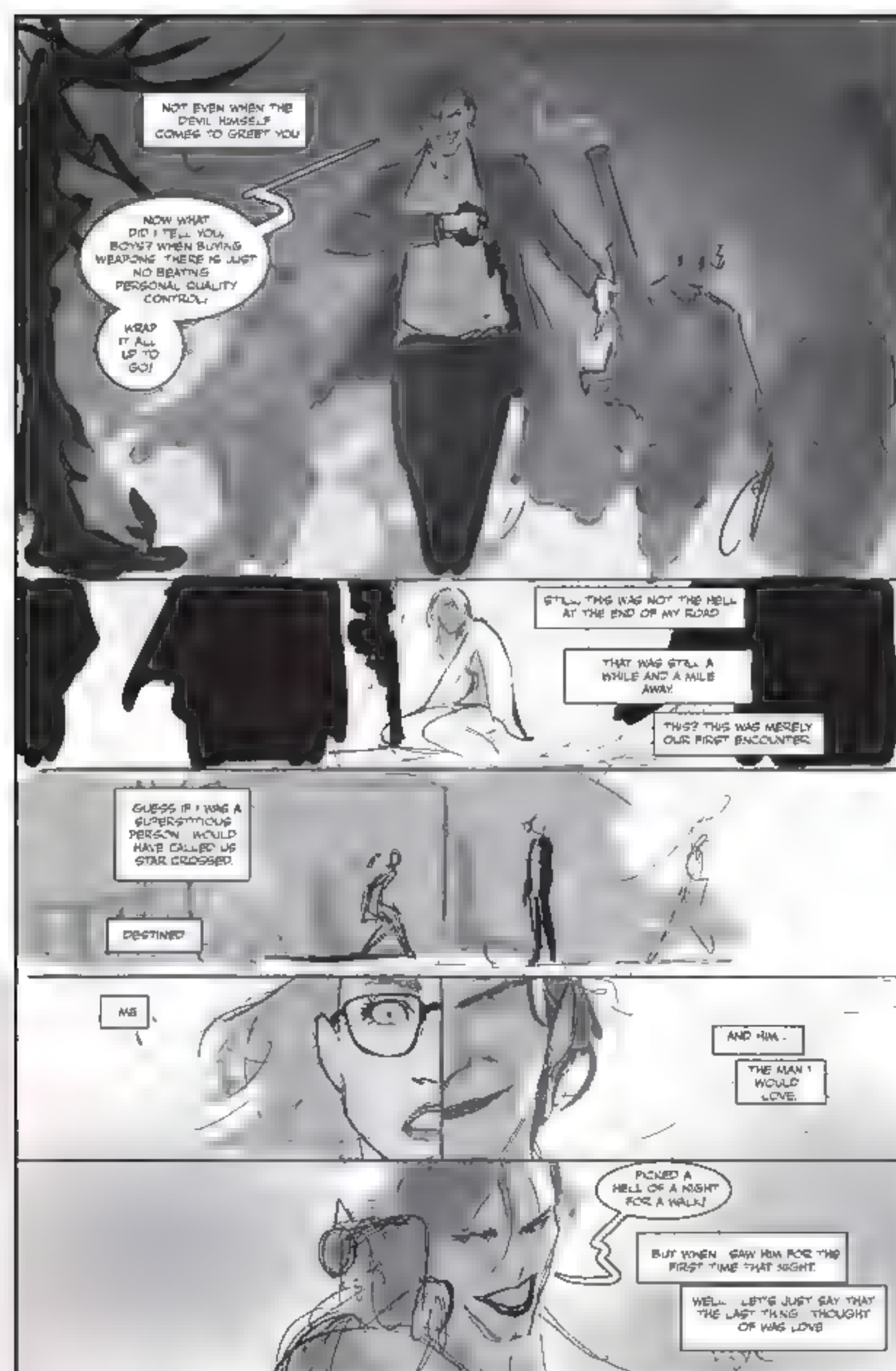
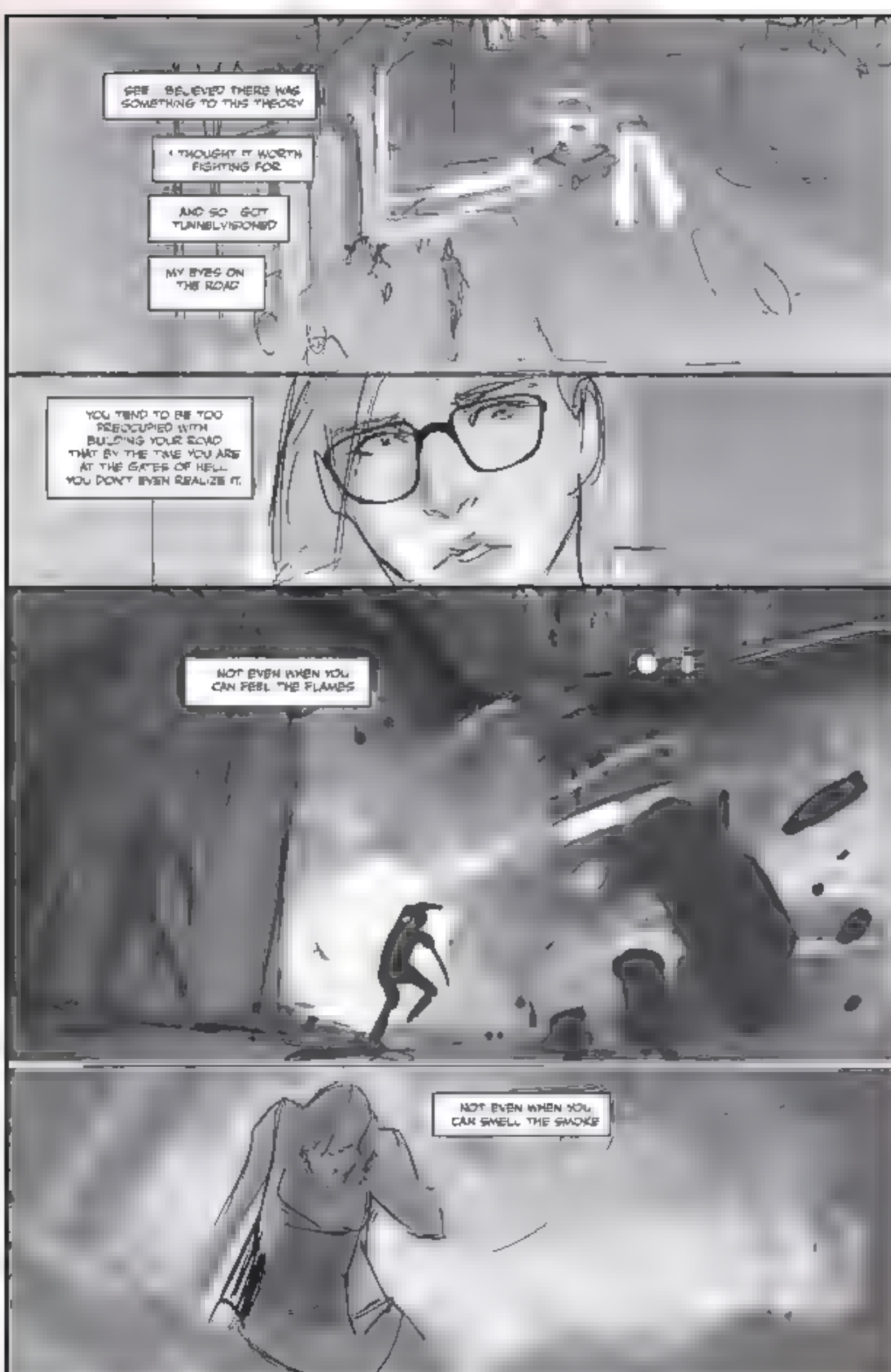
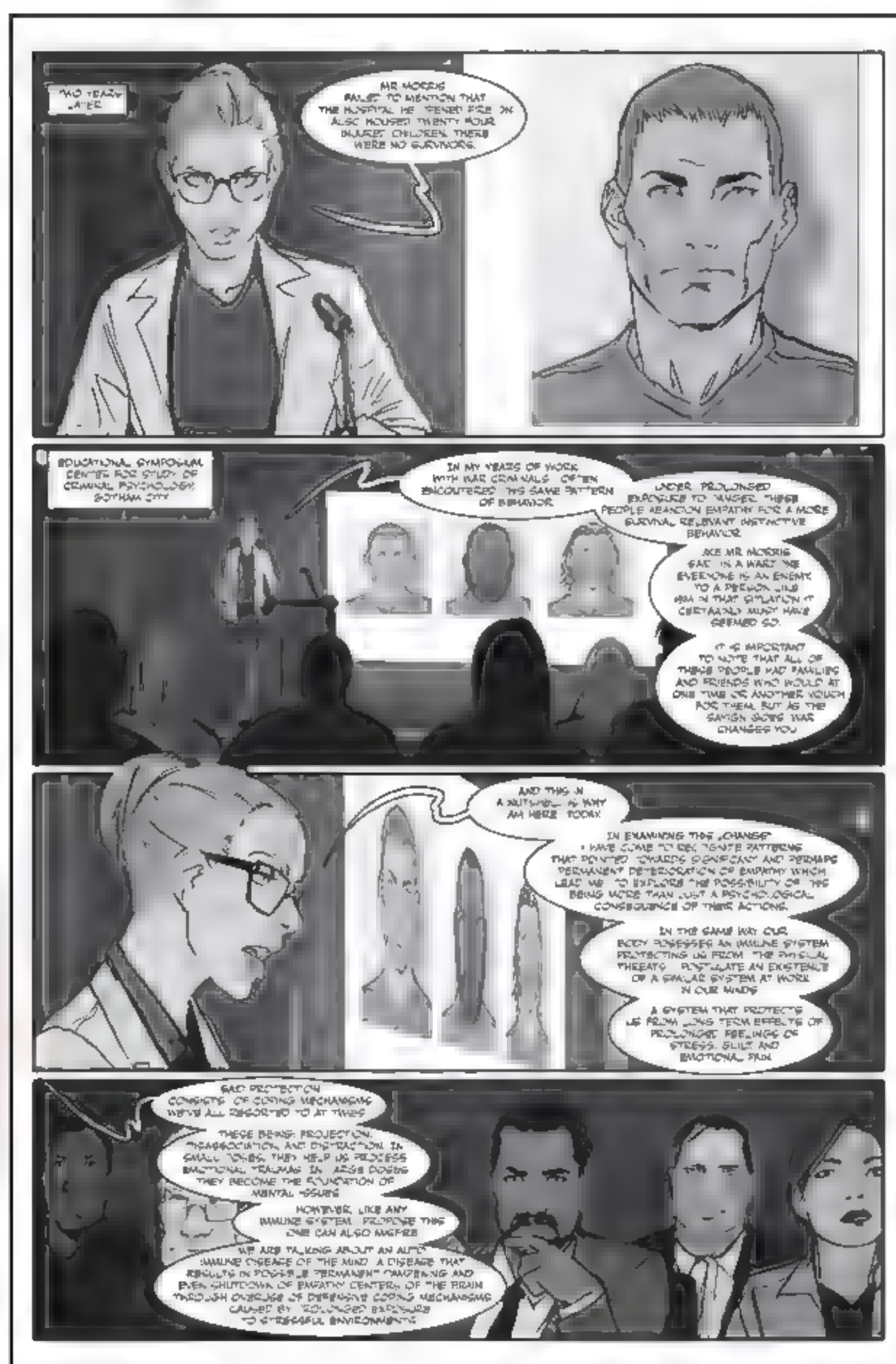
TO OTHER CRIMINALS HE WILL OFTEN PRESENT HIMSELF AS A GANGSTER HIS SMILE IN THOSE SITUATIONS MORE CRUEL AND SAVAGE



2019-?

Throughout the course of *Harleen's* development, Šejić continues to draft possible scenes for the characters. Some of these become fully realized scenes in the series, and some may appear in future stories.





A dark hallway. Harleen walks through it escorted by a guard. She asks to go alone.

She sticks to the shadows, as she comes in front of Joker's cell. Bulletproof glass for surveillance.

He is still bruised, bandaged. Broken arm. However there is an attractiveness to him. This Joker is a rock star. Wall-to-wall charisma and ego with a short fuse. Has quite a bit of David Bowie in him if I was to define it.

Plays solitaire. From inside of the cell he is holding a queen card, letter Q on it. Visually aligned just behind it in the shadows, Harleen.

Joker slowly gets up.

So, which one are you, one of my previous ones, or a brand-new brain tinkerer?

I can't really see you all the way over there. Come closer, I won't bite...I mean, I might, but...knocks at the glass...and chuckles.

Harleen pauses for a second...and then enters into the illuminated part of the hallway. In a way mimicking the scene from issue 1 on the street, but this time she should be safe. She certainly doesn't feel safe. They look at each other.

I am Doctor Harleen Quinzel. I have been assigned with your...case.

Joker stares at her...an uncomfortable moment lasting a bit too long.

Taps his lips. You know...funny thing about getting your head slammed into a wall repetitively...does a number on your memory...then again electroshock therapy probably hasn't done much to help with that either...

Harleen frowns.

What I mean is...you look like someone I met...but something is...

MISSING!

He shouts and suddenly slams the glass. It's a scary moment and she is taken aback, her body language and expression terrified.

Joker laughs. THERE YOU ARE! I knew you seemed familiar, just missing that terror in your eyes.

The streets...that night.

I let you off with a warning, yet here you are again. He chuckles.

And a shrink...heh...hahahhahah...

Are you done? Harleen asks.

He looks at her with some curiosity.

You tell me? That's why you're here, to pick through my brain, so I can tell you all the stories.

Oh, I've read up on the stories. You were at the same time a rich mobster, thrown into a vat of acid, and a failed poor comedian, abused by your father, mother, brother, and...she checks the file.

A matron of an orphanage that doubled as a sweatshop producing golf balls.

He laughs. I was always proud of that one.

But now you ruined it. I had such stories to tell you.

Lies.

Perhaps. But truth is so boring anyways. Dry...factual...misses the soul of things. It's a low-grade artist always on the brink of capturing the essence of their model but eternally failing.

I prefer the lies, illusions. A bit of makeup and a whole lot of theatricality.

Stories then.

He grins.

Monster stories?

You're in the right place, he says.

I'm interested in those.

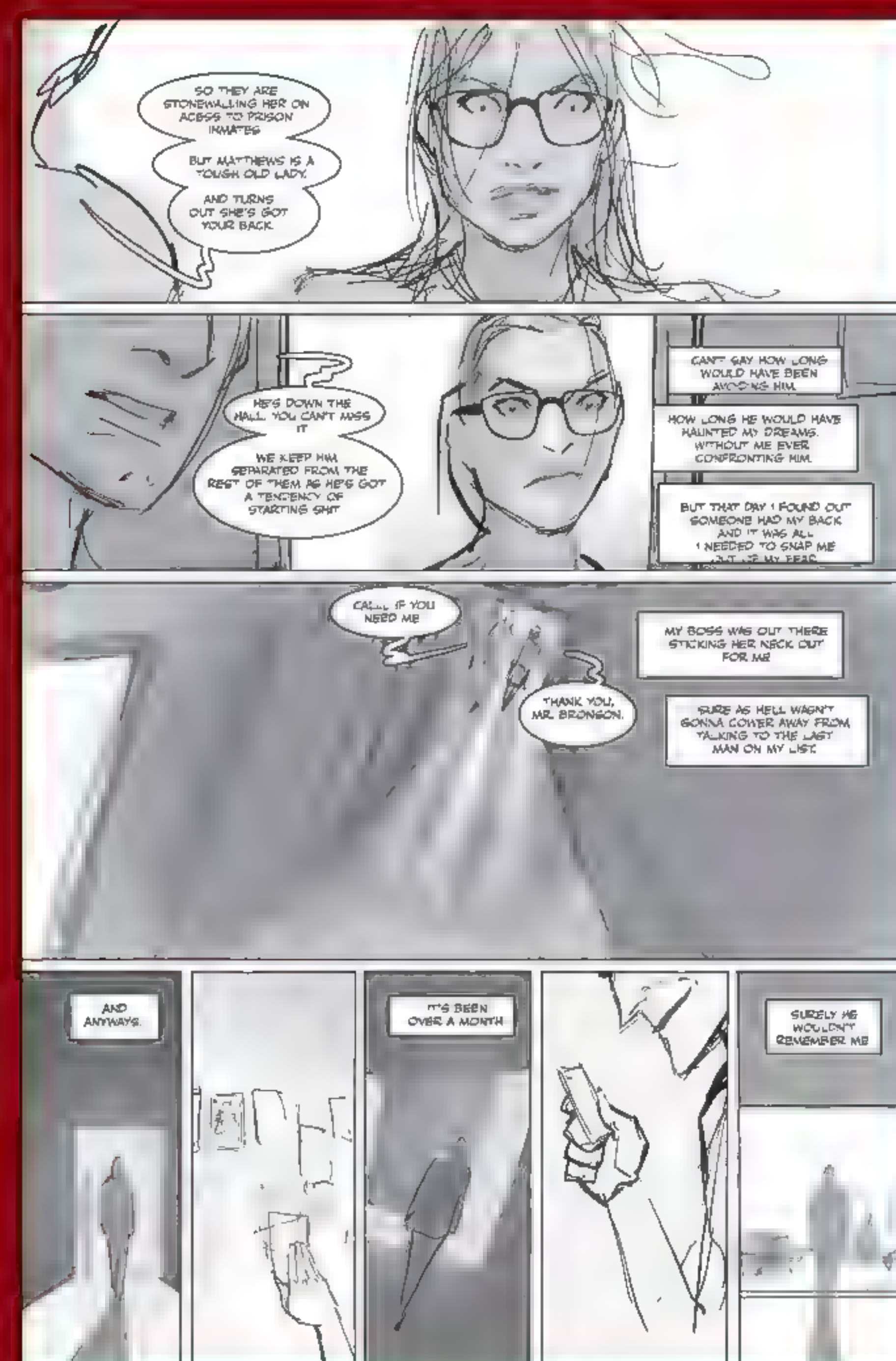
Very well, Mister Joker, why don't you tell me a story of Gotham. The city of monsters.

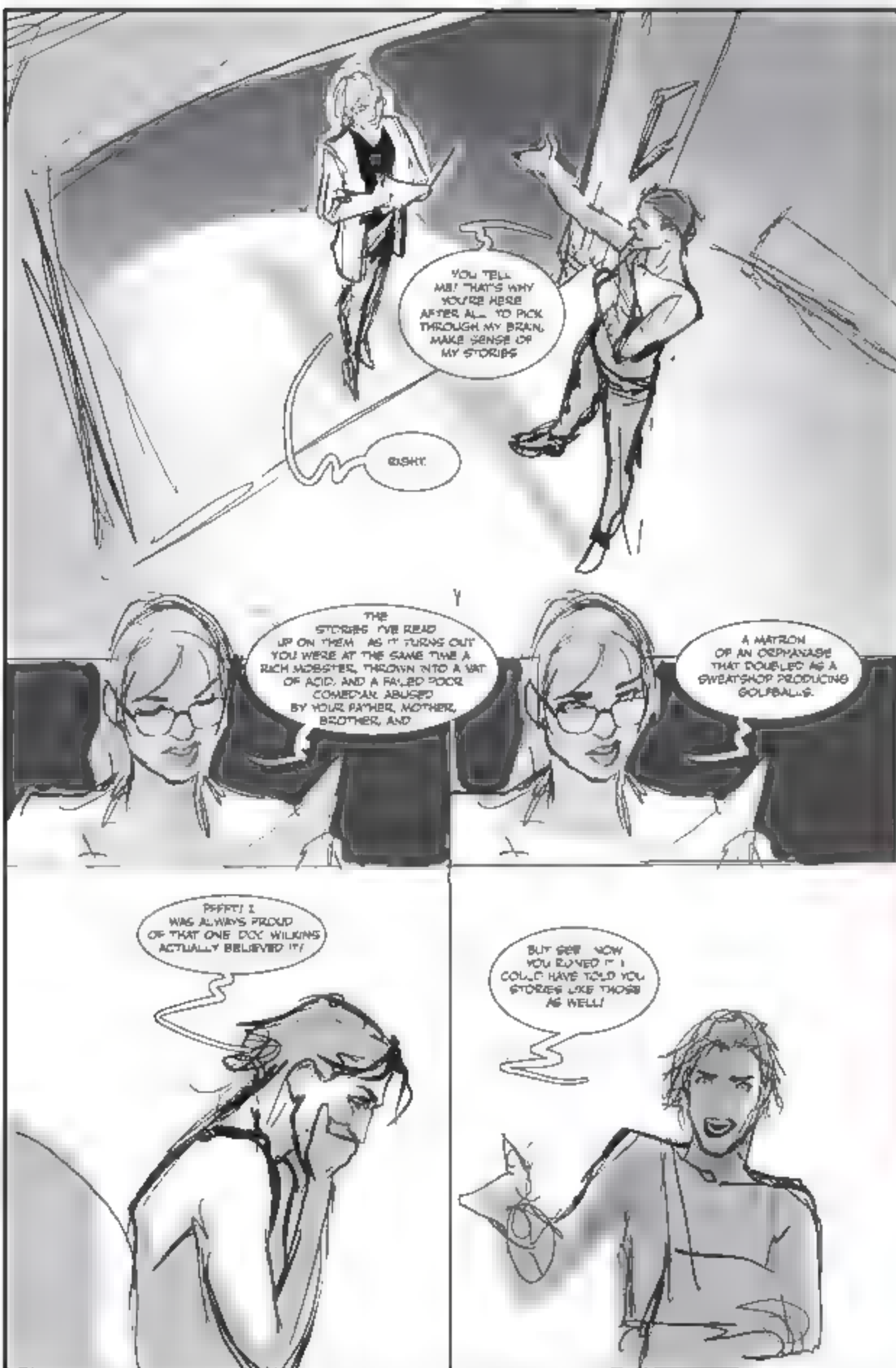
He looks at her. Grinning.

Call me Jay.

We zoom out from them through the dark hallway. In the distance a small figure of Harleen illuminated by the light of Joker's cell.

Very well, Mr. Jay.





We turn to see a little confused Joker.

Doc? You okay there?

I am fine Mr. Jay, she answers stiffly. Now. Shall we begin?

He looks at her a bit suspiciously, and shrugs as much as his straitjacket will allow.

Alright...shoot, doc! What do you want to know?

She looks at her notes. Do you ever feel pity for those you killed?

A little taken aback both by the question and her cold, stiff tone. He takes a minute...frowns, and says.

For the first ones...there was still that. I guess, the first victim on the streets of Gotham is one's empathy.

Harleen snaps out of her stiffness...

W-what?

I mean...regret, guilt...empathy...they bring about hesitation and, on the streets, hesitation will get you caught...get you killed.

I always figured, we killed that part of ourselves first.

Kill the attachments.

Harleen's shell is broken. The thing he just said fit her theory perfectly. She has lost any sense of detachment. This man that has been on her mind seemingly 24/7 these days also seems to be the perfect proof to her theory.

This is what she tells herself to distract herself from that other nagging sensation she would rather not face.

How did it start, Mr. Jay?

He notices the change on her face. (Unknown to audience for now, this is where he knows she took the bait.)

How does anyone go about killing their attachments...you get that one bad moment when the pain of them becomes too much...when you lose it all...

Is that what happened to you, she asks.

He looks at her...

It doesn't matter anymore.

It does to me.

Okay...how about you answer one of my questions first.

Fine.

How often do you watch me sleep?

Uh...she recovers.

It was just yesterday, I was...passing by and noticed the scars on you...

Is that pity I hear in your voice?

Don't, doctor. They are battle scars, nothing else. And like I said, I barely feel any pain.

He looks at the table avoiding her look.

She is awkwardly spinning a pen in her hand and drops it.

I would still like to know...about your loss...

He looks at her annoyed.

Why?

Because...I want to help...

Oh, stop it, doctor!

Tell me, and honestly! Why are you here? See, I'll give you this. You got me to tell you more about myself than anyone else ever did. And who knows, maybe it is my fault.

Maybe I was dwelling too much on why I wanted to see you smile. Maybe that is why I let you in...but in the end none of it matters.

In the end none of you come to Arkham because you truly want to help...

Because I know. You hide it better than others, but like them you too are here hoping to write a book or an article or a thesis...

In the end at least the cops are honest. They see us as monsters because we are just that!

No! she shouts.

All pretense of emotional distance gone.

She gets up to the camera and covers it with her coat.

She angrily walks behind him, he feels the straitjacket getting unbuckled.

She walks in front of him and turns her back to him. She is afraid. But fights it because there is another more powerful feeling taking her over...and she hopes.

It is a moment of desperate hope and trust.

Joker gets up as the straitjacket falls to the floor

It is a tense moment as his hand hovers behind her.

She is trembling.

I came here for my own purpose...but...I found myself caring. Caring so much that it scares me. You...scare me, and yet...

And then he hugs her. And whispers, Thank you, Doctor Quinn....

A silent panel and then she says...Harley...you can call me Harley...

Harley...Quinn he says. I like that...

Stjepan Šejić started his career in comics in 2006 as a colorist for the Arcana Comics series *Kade*. From there he moved to work at Top Cow, where he had extended runs on most of the company's properties, including *Witchblade*, *Artifacts*, *Aphrodite IX*, and *The Darkness*. Since then, Šejić has created the critically acclaimed series *Death Vigil* and the bestselling *Sunstone* series of graphic novels, among other projects. His recent works include art duties on DC Comics' *Aquaman*, *Suicide Squad*, and the ongoing *Justice League Odyssey* series. Alongside those projects, Šejić has created a large number of comics covers and contributed additional work to various other publishers. He resides in the silence of Croatia's coastline, enjoying the sea breeze and excessive amounts of coffee.



"This is the Harley Quinn story I want to read and the one that we, as thoughtful readers, deserve."

—Comics Beat

"...Stjepan Šejić at his absolute best."

—ComicBook.com

"A must-read for every fan of Harley Quinn."

—Kabooooom!

BEHIND THE PAINTED SMILE

A young psychiatrist with a potential cure for the madness that haunts Gotham City, Dr. Harleen Quinzel must prove her revolutionary theory to a skeptical establishment by delving into the disturbed minds of Arkham Asylum's deadliest inmates. But the more time she spends with her criminally insane subjects, the closer she is drawn to one patient in particular—and the further she falls away from reality.

The birth of legendary antihero Harley Quinn and the shocking origins of her twisted romance with the Joker are revealed in *Harleen*, a stunning new tale of love and obsession written and illustrated by renowned comics storyteller **Stjepan Šejić** (*Aquaman: Underworld*, *Sunstone*).



SON OF ULTRON

"THIS FAN...
THIS MONSTER!"

